

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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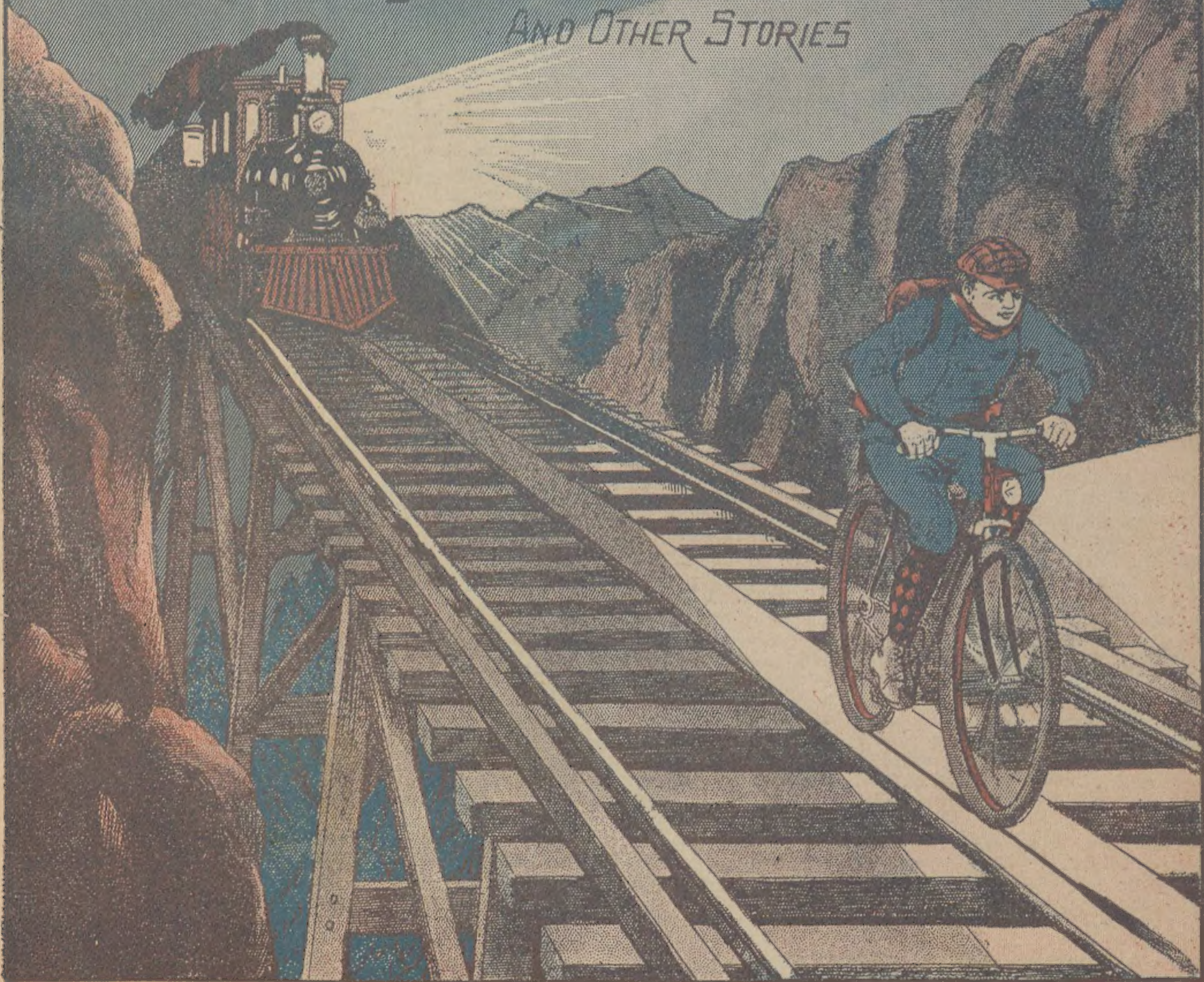
Price 5 Cents.

AROUND THE WORLD ON A BICYCLE,

A STORY OF ADVENTURES IN MANY LANDS.

BY JAS C. MERRITT.

AND OTHER STORIES



A cry of horror emanated from Ned's lips as he saw the locomotive dash into view and come rushing down upon him. But he did not pause an instant. His bicycle seemed to suddenly shoot forward along the single plank as though impelled by a catapult.

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STORIES OF ADVENTURE

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A STORY OF ADVENTURES IN MANY LANDS

By JAS. C. MERRITT.

CHAPTER I.

THE RIVAL WHEELMEN.

One bright spring day the Chicago Driving Park was a scene of a brilliant and enthusiastic assemblage.

The great annual tournament of the National Wheelmen's Association, which had drawn to the western metropolis thousands of bicycle clubmen, and expert riders of the "wheel" from all portions of the country, was in progress.

The grandstand contained many ladies, and the fair friends of the wheelmen were filled apparently with as much excitement and pleasure as the gentlemen themselves.

The preliminary events on the schedule of the tournament had taken place, and the audience was impatiently awaiting the announcement of the great championship race, which was par excellence the one event upon which the interest of the wheelmen and their friends was centered.

Bicycle associations from almost every State had sent experts to represent their societies and compete for the grand prize and the champion's medal, which was to reward the successful bicyclist who won the great race.

There was a spirit of friendly rivalry among the clubs, and the members of the various associations represented among those expert wheelmen who had been selected to compete in the great race were enthusiastic in the praises of their favorites.

At last, much to the gratification of all, the order came from the judges' stand for all the starters in the race to be in readiness to respond to their names and enter the course preparatory to the start.

The secretary of the tournament then began to call off the names of the men entered for the great race, and they responded in order, and running beside their burnished wheels took their place abreast, just beyond a line drawn across the half-mile circular course over which the race was to be run.

The two last names called were Ned Worth and Ralph Bentley of the Chicago city club.

Because of the existence of a diversity of opinion regarding the merits of these two wheelmen, which could not be reconciled among the members of their association, they had both been entered by the same club, as was consistent with the rules of the tournament association then in force.

Ned Worth was a young man of twenty-one, and he was built like a young gladiator, yet his remarkably well-developed frame was the very ideal of symmetry and grace. His face was a frank, pleasing and intelligent one.

Ralph Bentley was a young man three years the senior of Ned. He, too, was a well-built and rather handsome young fellow, but about him there was a certain supercilious and egotistical air which unmistakably bespoke the snob.

There was a marked difference in the costume and "outfit" of the rival wheelmen of the same club.

Ned Worth's bicycle was an old one, which, though now in an excellent state of repair, had been in use for more than a year. Moreover, it was not the very best racing wheel made, though it was the best Ned's means would allow him to procure.

Ralph Bentley's bicycle, on the other hand, was a "full nickel-plated improved Columbia export," the best bicycle made.

Young Bentley could well afford to provide himself with the most expensive make of bicycle, for he was a wealthy young fellow, and the nephew of Horace Wheatcroft, the millionaire furniture manufacturer of Chicago. Within the year Ralph Bentley had been admitted to partnership with his uncle, and Ned Worth, who had been employed as a bookkeeper previously by the millionaire, was still retained in the same capacity by the new firm.

From the very moment of their first meeting there had existed a secret feeling of antagonism between the two young men. Ned disliked Bentley for his arrogant and overbearing manner, and the latter took an aversion to Ned because he, though ever prompt and faithful in the discharge of his duty, was not inclined to be servile and fawning.

Latterly Bentley had made a discovery which caused him to entertain a bitter hatred for the young bookkeeper.

The two young men, as we shall learn, were rivals in more senses than one.

As Ned Worth took his place among the starters in the great bicycle race he glanced up at a particular portion of the grandstand, and he caught a glance from a pair of bright eyes that made his heart beat fast.

It was a beautiful face upon which the eyes of the young wheelman rested for a moment—the face of a young girl of sixteen, who waved her handkerchief and smiled encouragingly upon him, and Ned doffed his cap and waved his hand to the lovely maiden in token of recognition.

This little by-play did not escape the observation of Ralph Bentley, and he followed the direction in which Ned looked as he bowed with his own glance, and he saw the fair young girl who had recognized Ned.

Ralph Bentley's face darkened, and he flashed a look upon young Worth which was full of hatred and malice.

"And so Lucy Dean prefers this beggar to me—to me, Ralph Bentley, who can raise her to affluence and a position of social eminence which she should be proud to win? But it shall not be. Worth shall not win her. 'I'll crush him,' said Bentley, under his breath, but he fairly hissed the last words through his clenched teeth.

Ned Worth turned quickly, and the glances of the two young men met. The former had heard the sibilant words which anger had caused Bentley to utter. He saw that the speaker had noted the recognition which pretty Lucy Dean had accorded him, and he comprehended the meaning of the fierce light which flashed in Bentley's eyes.

"Did you address me, sir?" demanded Ned, in a quiet tone, but fixing a defiant glance upon his wealthy rival.

Without deigning to reply, Bentley abruptly turned his back upon Ned, and addressing a young man at his side whose wealth equalled his own and who was a boon companion of his, he said:

"I mean to leave this club. I do not care to longer remain a member of an association where I am brought in contact with menials."

With the last words he flashed a glance full of insulting meaning at Ned, and his friend laughed sneeringly.

Ned flushed, and his anger arose at this public and unprovoked affront.

"Sir!" he exclaimed, "was that remark intended for me?"

The words escaped the lips of the high-spirited young man almost involuntarily. The succeeding instant, as he recollected that Bentley was his employer, he regretted that he had accorded the insult any attention.

It was no personal consideration which occasioned Ned's regret that he had resented the covert but none the less cutting sneer of Bentley.

At that moment, however, Ned thought of his widow mother and his invalid sister, whose sole stay and support he had been for years.

The times were very hard, for it was a period of commercial depression, and the city was full of unemployed men. Ned knew that if he was to lose his present situation it would be almost impossible for him to secure another without a long period of delay, which would surely entail suffering for those whom he loved.

The expense necessitated to procure almost constant medical attendance for his invalid sister had been a severe drain upon Ned's earnings, and even with the strictest economy he had been unable to lay aside any of his earnings for a time of need.

The young bread winner had begun the struggle of life early, and he had already learned that the strife is hard, and that the battle is not always with the strong.

Ned knew that Ralph Bentley had it in his power to discharge him from his present situation if he so willed.

What retort might have been made to Ned's last remark by Bentley, who turned upon him as he spoke, cannot be told, for just then the starter's bell struck, the word "Go!" was given, and the attention of every one of the young men who participated in the great race was now centered upon the effort to distance his competitors.

The racing wheelmen obtained a fair start, and they shot over the starting line simultaneously and sped past the grandstand abreast.

The flying wheels of burnished metal reflected a thousand dancing lights. The gay attire of the wheelmen contrasted with the dun roadbed and the green heath beyond. It was a pleasing and exciting spectacle. The racing men leaned forward well over their wheels, while every muscle was strained in their efforts to impart the greatest possible speed to the wheel which they bestrode.

The audience cheered, men shouted and waved their hats. Ladies clapped their hands, and dainty handkerchiefs in fair hands fluttered in the breeze.

And so the great championship race of the bicycle tournament began.

Of all the concourse of people in the grandstand, perhaps there was not one single person more deeply interested in the issue of the race than pretty Lucy Dean.

Her cheeks were flushed, her great luminous, dark eyes flashed with excitement, and she clasped her hands while she leaned forward with parted lips in an eager and expectant attitude and watched the wheelmen as they sped down the race-course.

But the fair girl had eyes and thoughts for one of the party only. She watched Ned Worth alone.

The young wheelman and this entrancing little beauty had plighted their troth. Lucy Dean had promised to become Ned's wife as soon as he could provide a suitable home for her, and her parents had sanctioned their betrothal.

Lucy Dean was a girl of a thousand. She was possessed of a true and steadfast nature, and she was as good as she was beautiful. Lucy had been reared in humble life, but she had obtained an excellent education at the public schools.

Her father was an artist, and he had always succeeded in keeping his little family comfortably, though the struggle was sometimes a hard one, for he had been in poor health for years.

As Lucy watched the race, hoping for the success of her lover, people all about her were conversing and calling out excitedly:

"The Boston man leads!"

"No. Hurrah! The New Yorker is with him!"

"Philadelphia forever! Our man is to the front!"

Such were the shouts and cries of the spectators of the exciting race.

Meanwhile, as they made the first curve, the wheelmen kept well together, but as the first quarter was swept away

under their flying wheels, the spectators saw that three of the racers who were recognized by their colors as the Boston, New York and Philadelphia men had drawn to the front, where they were contesting the race "neck and neck."

Occasionally one or the other of these men would draw a trifle ahead, but down the second quarter the contest between the three was so close as to render the excitement of the spectators most feverish and intense.

Lucy was in despair.

"Ned is left behind, and I was so sure he would win. It's too bad," murmured the pretty girl, and she was almost ready to cry with vexation and disappointment.

Ned had been in training for this race, and he had in a modest way expressed his confidence that he would make a good showing during a conversation with Lucy that very morning.

Lucy can distinguish Ned all the time, and she sees that he is constantly maintaining a place at the front of those who are behind the three men who lead.

Presently the three leaders reach the homestretch, and for a moment or so Lucy, whose eyes are yet riveted on Ned, is breathless as she sees that her lover has suddenly taken the lead of the throng behind the three leaders, and that he is diminishing the distance between himself and them. At lightning speed goes the young champion now. He reaches the leaders and shoots past them like a meteor. A shout goes up from the crowd, and a hundred voices ask:

"Who is the young man in blue?"

CHAPTER II.

A TOUR AROUND THE WORLD ON A BICYCLE IS PROPOSED.

The members of Ned Worth's club were delighted and wild with enthusiasm when they saw their representative take the lead.

They proudly shouted his name, and it was taken up and repeated by a thousand voices.

Lucy Dean, in the excitement of the moment, scarcely knowing what she did, cried out with the rest.

Down the homestretch came Ned Worth, closely pursued for several moments by the three wheelmen whom he had so suddenly passed. Far over his wheel leans the young racer. His cheeks are flushed and his panting breath tells that he at last is putting forth all the strength which until now he had held in reserve.

The great wheel seems like an object endowed with life, and of it the rider appears to be a part. The pace tells, and further and further the nearest of Ned's followers are left behind.

"The race is ours!" shout his friends, and now, as the winning wheelman shoots by the judges' stand way ahead of his competitors and wins the great championship race, he doffs his cap and wafts a kiss toward the grandstand.

Lucy returns it, and oh, how proud and delighted she is.

And then, when Ned halts, his fellow clubmen clamber over the barrier and throng upon the track.

Men who have scarcely deigned to notice him before shake hands with him, and speak words of unqualified praise and commendation.

The triumph of the champion is complete, and he is carried away to the quarters of his club on the grounds.

But as soon as possible Ned makes some excuse and leaves his friends.

He has promised to escort Lucy home, and he does not intend to keep her waiting.

Near the grandstand Ned meets the young girl and they walk away to the entrance of the grounds.

"Oh, how happy and proud I am. You did splendidly," said Lucy, pressing her companion's arm.

As she spoke a carriage whirled by, and in it was seated Ralph Bentley, looking angry and crestfallen.

Bentley touched his hat to Lucy and she returned his salutation very coolly, noting that he regarded her companion with a glance of hatred.

Bentley had sought to force his attention upon Lucy Dean in the past, and he had persisted in doing so, though he had never received any encouragement.

While Ralph Bentley returned to his home in his elegant carriage, Ned and Lucy availed themselves of a convenient street car.

Despite the pleasure and sense of triumph which Ned experienced, and much as he was naturally elated at his suc-

cess, the premonition of an impending calamity which had taken possession of his mind marred his happiness.

He instinctively felt that in the dark glances of Ralph Bentley there was a hidden menace.

Lucy was quick to observe the shadow which rested on Ned's brow, and she anxiously brought him to tell her what troubled him.

Ned replied frankly.

He said:

"Ralph Bentley hates me because you have favored me, and since I have defeated him in the race to-day I apprehend that his jealousy will prompt him to injure me. In short, I think he will have me discharged from my situation with the firm of which he is the junior partner."

"Do not entertain such gloomy thoughts. That would be a contemptible revenge. Perhaps your suspicions are without foundation. But if they are not he cannot sunder our hearts, Ned," said Lucy, cheerfully.

In her ignorance of the world she did not fully appreciate the magnitude of the misfortune which Bentley had in his power to bring upon her lover.

Conversing earnestly about the future, Ned and his affianced arrived at the young girl's home, where the young wheelman was made welcome and warmly congratulated upon his success in the tournament.

Every one seemed determined to make a hero of him, and Ned was compelled to accept the situation, which was a decidedly pleasant one, after all.

But Ned had promised to return home early and acquaint his mother and sister, who were, of course, very much interested in his success, with the result of the great race, and he did not long delay at Lucy's home.

Ned's mother was delighted when he told her how he won the race, and the pale, wan face of his little invalid sister flushed with pleasure and excitement as she listened while he told the story of the great tournament.

The noble youth felt repaid for all the efforts which it had cost him to attain success when he saw how proud and happy the result had made his loved ones, and he did not mar their pleasure by alluding to Ralph Bentley or the apprehension of misfortune which he feared.

The following morning Ned was up betimes, and at the usual hour he was at his desk in the office of Wheatcroft & Bentley.

Just at noon, however, as the bookkeepers—several of whom were employed in the office of the great firm—were about to leave the office to procure their midday lunch, a messenger boy entered and handed a note to the manager of the office—one Stickney—who always curried favor with Bentley.

Stickney read the note, and then he called Ned into his private office.

The young man entered the presence of his superior outwardly calm, but he felt that what he had dreaded was about to transpire.

The result proved that his apprehensions were well founded.

"I have just received a note from Mr. Bentley in which he states he deems it necessary to reduce the office force, and directs me to inform you that he will be obliged to dispense with your services from this date," said Mr. Stickney, not unkindly.

"Then I am summarily discharged. I expected this. It is like the coward," replied Ned.

"I am sorry for you, Ned, but I can do nothing but obey orders. Mr. Wheatcroft is absent in Europe, as you are aware, and entire authority has been delegated to Mr. Bentley during the absence of the senior partner," said Stickney.

"I will go, but I fear I shall find it difficult to obtain another situation. I always gave satisfaction, sir, I believe."

"Always, and I will give you the best possible recommendation," replied Stickney, and thereupon he wrote a note of recommendation which Ned accepted, and after saying good-by to the manager and his fellow clerks, who sympathized with him sincerely, Ned left the office where he had served long and faithfully.

In the street the sun shone brightly, but it had no power to dispel the shadows which had fallen upon Ned's spirits. He was brave and resolute, though, and he determined to keep up under this calamity, and that afternoon he began a search for employment, which was unsuccessful.

At night he returned home very weary, and he broke the news of his discharge to his mother and sister, saying:

"It may all turn out for the best. No doubt I shall have

to look around some, but who knows but I may obtain even a better situation than the one I have lost?"

Ned's seemingly cheerful view of the situation went far toward reassuring his mother and sister, and they were not as apprehensive of the future as they might otherwise have been.

That night there was to be a meeting of the bicycle club to which Ned belonged, and the young man desired to be present.

Some time previous to the hour at which the wheelmen were to convene Ned repaired to the residence of his affianced, and, after an interview with Lucy, during which he told her of his discharge and received her sympathy and encouragement, he repaired to the club-room.

Ralph Bentley was there, and he addressed Ned, saying:

"I want a word with you."

"I am at your service," replied Ned, and Bentley drew him aside and continued:

"You have seen fit to come between me and the girl I have determined to win. I am resolved to crush you. You have been discharged, and my influence shall be exerted to keep you from getting employment unless you promise to renounce all attempts to win Lucy Dean."

"Coward, contemptible cur that you are, I defy you!" cried Ned, loudly, and all present heard his voice and thronged toward him and Bentley.

"Liar!" shrieked Bentley, furiously.

The words had barely passed his lips when he measured his length on the floor, felled by a blow from Ned's clenched fist.

Bentley sprang to his feet, and staggered away, like the coward he was, muttering fierce threats, and those who knew Bentley's revengeful disposition felt that he would be Ned Worth's life-long enemy.

The club gave Ned a reception that evening, and he was the hero of the hour, but he was far from happy.

He did not regret that he had chastised Bentley as he deserved, but he felt lowered in his own estimation at the thought that he had engaged in a public broil with one whom he despised.

The succeeding day and for many days thereafter Ned vainly sought for a situation. Some of his friends of the club had assured him that they would use their influence for him, but nothing came of this.

Meanwhile his funds were exhausted—the wolf of want was perilously near his fireside, and the young man was becoming desperate and despairing as he contemplated the gloomy prospect before him, in which he could discern no ray of hopeful light.

Ned had drained the bitter cup of poverty to the dregs in bygone days, and now it was presented to his lips again, and he felt that he would dare anything honorable to taste of the nectar of wealth which seemed further beyond his reach than ever before.

One night when Ned felt particularly despondent he attended a meeting of his bicycle club, and after the president had called the meeting to order he introduced a corpulent gentleman to the organization in these words:

"Gentlemen, I have the honor of presenting Mr. Jason Shrewd, the proprietor of The National Wheelman, the leading newspaper devoted to the wheelmen and out-of-door sports generally, now published in America. Mr. Shrewd will address you and make you a proposition which will interest you all."

Thereupon Mr. Shrewd took the floor and said:

"Gentlemen, it is my desire to make my newspaper the foremost journal of its class in the world, and to cause it to become yet more popular than it now is. To that end, and that the interest of every wheelman in the land may be attracted to my paper, I have resolved to send a man on a journey around the world on a bicycle.

"The tour of the world on a bicycle will be attended with many perils and difficulties, and dangers of every kind will have to be met and overcome. I desire, therefore, to engage a man who is not only an expert wheelman, but a brave, resolute and determined fellow, who knows no such word as fail."

CHAPTER III.

NED WORTH STARTS ON HIS BICYCLE TOUR AROUND THE WORLD.

Mr. Shrewd paused for a moment while the audience in consuming interest waited for him to proceed.

Presently he continued:

"While I do not wish to underrate the dangers and hardships which the man who undertakes to make a trip around the world on a bicycle in the interests of my paper may encounter, on the other hand I desire to call your attention to the fact that if he succeeds in safely accomplishing the journey he will win the fame and a monetary reward, which is worthy of consideration.

"I make the following offer: I will pay the man who undertakes the journey a salary of one hundred dollars per week and expenses, and also give him a bonus of five thousand dollars in cash, provided he makes the journey in a period of twelve months' time. Every hour of time to be counted. Three hundred and sixty-five days for the year.

"The volunteer must for his part send one letter to my paper each and every week, which must contain an account of his adventures as he proceeds on his journey. This letter will be duly published in *The National Wheelman*, from week to week.

"Now, gentlemen, is there any one present who will volunteer for this novel expedition?"

There ensued a moment of silence.

The prospect of traversing the world on a bicycle did not seem attractive to the wheelmen, it appeared. Perhaps they reflected that they would be compelled to ride through remote foreign lands, peopled with fierce and savage men, and abounding in dangerous wild animals.

"I don't think there is any one here who will care to undertake the journey—eh, Crummie?" whispered Ralph Bentley to a dudish young fellow at his elbow.

"No; it would be a great thing to do and all that, deah boy, but deuced unpleasant, don't yer know."

"Well, well, young gentlemen, is there not one daring and adventurous spirit among you all who will volunteer for the service I require?" continued Mr. Shrewd, after waiting for a brief space.

Then suddenly Ned Worth arose, saying:

"I am your man, sir!"

His voice rang out clear and distinct, and the tone was resolute and determined.

Every eye was turned upon the young champion of the tournament, and a murmur of applause ran through the audience.

"Your name, sir?" said Mr. Shrewd.

"Ned Worth."

"Ah! the winner of the champion race. I thought I recognized your face. By George, sir! you look as though you had the right sort of stuff in you. I accept you. You shall see the world on a bicycle and win fame and fortune for yourself, I hope," said Mr. Shrewd.

Then he shook Ned's hand warmly, and after some conversation the young wheelman accompanied the enterprising publisher to his hotel, where final arrangements were made for the great trip around the world.

A regular contract was drawn up and duly signed by both Mr. Shrewd and Ned.

From the moment when the gentleman had stated the amount of the remuneration which the party who was engaged to make the trip around the world was to receive, Ned determined to volunteer.

At last he saw a way opened whereby he could not only earn the means to provide for the support of his mother and sister, but also win what seemed to him a veritable little fortune.

If he succeeded he could then afford to marry Lucy, and then—happiness.

Ralph Bentley was astonished when Ned volunteered to undertake the journey around the world. At first he experienced a feeling of baffled fury as he saw that Ned had found a paying situation at last despite his machinations against him. But a moment of reflection opened new horizons before him, and an exultant light scintillated from his fierce eyes.

Ralph Bentley left the club-room soon after Ned took his departure with Mr. Shrewd.

As he walked swiftly away the shadow of evil thoughts darkened his face, and he muttered almost inarticulately:

"Let him go. Let him set out upon his journey around the world. He shall never return. With him forever removed I shall win Lucy Dean after all."

In Ralph Bentley's heart a dark scheme now had its inception, and he was determined that it should be carried into execution forthwith.

He directed his course to a certain hostelry not far from

the corner of Madison and Clark streets, which bore a "shady" reputation.

At this place Bentley found a man of whom he had come in quest.

The fellow's name was Blanchard, and he was a hanger-on about the race-course and sporting circles. Though now fallen low enough, he had known better days, and he was a shrewd and reckless as well as an unscrupulous character.

"Blanchard is the man for my work," Ralph Bentley had decided as soon as he resolved upon the dark plot against Ned which his hatred inspired.

It seemed that the two men, though moving in widely different spheres of society, had some previous acquaintance from the familiar manner in which they entered into conversation.

Bentley came to the point at once, and told Blanchard what he wanted.

The latter was ready to serve the more polished and less daring villain, and a bargain was struck then and there.

Little did Ned Worth surmise that even before he started upon his bicycle trip around the world a vindictive enemy was plotting to foil him.

Yet so it was.

Blanchard was to act as Bentley's tool.

The scoundrel was engaged to follow Ned.

When he and Bentley separated at the conclusion of the interview, the latter said:

"Remember you are to dog him day and night. You are to place obstacles in his way, you are to delay and detain him, and, finally, when the opportunity comes, when you can make sure of him without bringing suspicion upon yourself, you are to do so. Ned Worth must never return. When you come back and bring me the evidence that he will never be heard of again, you shall receive a bonus of five thousand dollars, the very amount which has been promised Worth, besides the salary I have agreed to allow you."

With this Bentley gave the villain a considerable sum of money, and the latter swore fealty to his service.

Blanchard was a dangerous man.

Well would it have been if some friendly voice could have warned the adventurous young wheelman against him.

The day following the night which witnessed the making of the nefarious compact between Bentley and his emissary, Ned occupied the time in making necessary preparations for his journey. He was resolved to proceed overland to San Francisco, and in the metropolis of the Pacific Coast he was to receive by mail from Mr. Shrewd, who undertook to procure them, letters of introduction to foreign United States ministers from the Secretary of State and other officials at the head of our government.

Ned's outfit consisted of a serviceable flannel suit, a brace of revolvers, a canteen for drink and a haversack for provisions when he was ready to set out upon his journey, and Mr. Shrewd had provided him with one of the most perfect bicycles ever made. As funds would be needed, the young man was not only provided with letters of credit on foreign banks, but he also carried a large sum of cash with him in a treasure belt which he wore concealed under his blouse. Five weeks' salary had been paid Ned in advance, and this he left with his mother, and it was agreed that she should receive such further sums from his salary, as it came due, as she might call for during his absence.

When Ned first announced his intention of setting out on his bicycle trip around the world, the good lady would not hear to it for a moment, but Ned finally succeeded in winning her consent.

Lucy was heart-broken at the thought of parting with Ned for a long period, and the devoted girl knew that this parting might be forever; but she saw that Ned was determined, and so she did not oppose his plans further than to advise him not to go.

At last everything was in readiness, and Ned took a fond farewell of mother, sister and sweetheart. Lucy promised again to be true to the absent one, and he agreed to write her as often as possible. The club had arranged to escort Ned out of the city and give him a cheering start, and they did so.

At precisely ten o'clock a. m., May 20, 18—, the start was made.

Ned soon left the city and his enthusiastic friends behind, and away he sped, making as direct a course as possible for Omaha. The country people along the route thronged forth to see him and cheer him on his way at every hamlet through which he passed.

Ned made rapid progress, and nothing in the way of adventure worthy of special note occurred to him until he was in the State of Iowa, not far from Sioux City.

It was a warm day, and at noon the young wheelman halted at a wayside inn, where his appearance created quite a stir.

Before he reached the inn a horseman, who was well mounted, rode by Ned, and as the young man saw his face it occurred to him that he had seen the same man several times before at different places since he left Chicago.

At the time Ned gave this thought no further consideration; but when he arrived at the inn he saw the man who had passed him on the road there. Still Ned only supposed he was some ordinary traveler who by a mere coincidence chanced to be following the same route as himself.

The stranger stood at the bar when Ned entered the hotel, and he was drinking a glass of liquor. The young wheelman was very thirsty, and he stepped up to the bar beside the stranger and called for a glass of ale. It was placed on the bar before him, but before drinking Ned turned to the door to glance at a country stage-coach which came rattling up. Presently, however, he drank his ale and started for the dining-room.

Before reaching it he suddenly reeled and sank into a chair. In an instant he realized that the ale must have been drugged. Ned feared that he was fatally poisoned, but he hastily swallowed an emetic which he found in a package of medicines which his mother had given him just before he left home. In a few moments he was relieved, and in half an hour he felt "all right" again. Ned said nothing about his suspicions, but as he was leaving the inn a colored man who was employed there whispered to him:

"You want to look out for that black-bearded man what was here when you come. He put suffin' in yer beer—I seed him—an' he called for his hoss and rode off as soon as you took sick. He's a stranger heah, sah, but he is a bad man fo' suah."

Ned rewarded the friendly darky, and from that moment he believed the bearded stranger whom he had met so often was a secret enemy.

Ned resumed his journey, and after leaving Omaha, where the wheelmen tendered him a grand reception, he continued westward, following the Pacific railway.

Meanwhile, the greatest interest in his movements was manifested by bicycle men everywhere. Bets were freely offered and taken. Most of those who were personally acquainted with Ned were willing to wager any amount that he would make the journey around the world on his bicycle in the specified time of twelve months, or three hundred and sixty-five days. Of course, if Ned fell an hour, or even a fraction of an hour short, he would lose the bonus of five thousand dollars.

There were men, however, in bicycle circles of excellent judgment, who, after computing the distance around the world and taking into account the dangers and delays which Ned would be sure to meet with even if he returned alive, who offered even money to any amount that he would not complete the journey in the allotted time.

Ralph Bentley and his clique wagered recklessly. The rival of the young champion wheelman bet a small fortune that Ned would not make the journey in three hundred and sixty-five days, and he wagered even more that he, Ned, would not return at all.

After striking out on the plains the young wheelman kept a bright lookout for the stranger, whom he believed had attempted to poison him, but he saw nothing of him until one day just at nightfall, when he was speeding over the prairie, far from the haunts of civilized men, he caught sight of a solitary horseman in his rear, who disappeared almost instantly in a buffalo wallow.

Ned had purchased a field glass in Omaha, and he turned it upon the horseman behind him before the latter vanished, and through the glass he saw that the rider was the very man who had drugged his drink at the Iowa inn.

Ned was apprehensive that the presence of his mysterious enemy boded him no good, and less than half an hour later his fears were realized.

Suddenly a wild chorus of fierce yells rang out, breaking rudely upon the solemn stillness that brooded over the great prairie at eventide, and turning and glancing behind him, Ned beheld a score of wild Comanche Indians, mounted upon fleet mustangs, emerge from a depression in the plain and come dashing in pursuit of him at full speed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE YOUNG WHEELMAN IS CAPTURED BY THE INDIANS.

At the date of which we are writing, as the reader is aware, most of the aborigines of the great West maintained a peaceful attitude toward the whites, and Ned had anticipated but little danger from encounters with the redmen.

True, the famous Apache chief Geronimo and the braves of his nomadic and ever turbulent tribe were known to be upon the warpath, but this isolated band of hostiles, although they had already committed many depredations on the Arizona frontier, as yet confined their field of operation to that locality, and Ned was too far north to meet with them on his great overland bicycle ride.

Surprise as well as alarm were contending emotions in the young wheelman's mind when he beheld the Comanches swooping down upon him.

At one period, some three years previously, Ned had served with the railway engineers along the line of the overland railway route, and thus he had obtained a knowledge of the appearance of several of the Indian tribes, and almost at the first glance he identified the band of Indians who had so suddenly appeared from out a depression in the plains as Comanches.

The special treaty of former years between this tribe and the government had but recently been renewed and ratified by their chiefs.

As Ned worked the pedals of his bicycle, and leaned far over the wheel so as to impart his weight most advantageously to accelerate his speed, and sent the glistening wheel revolving at wondrous speed, his thoughts were principally centered upon his efforts to distance his savage and menacing pursuers.

But while he thus fled the knowledge of the presence of the dark-faced stranger in the immediate neighborhood troubled him, and since that personage, whom we are aware he was inclined to regard as an enemy since the episode at the Iowa inn, had disappeared in the very depression whence the Indians had come, Ned naturally connected him with the savages who were bearing down upon him.

The roadbed between the iron rails of the route of the iron horse was well ballasted and level and smooth.

The wheeling indeed was excellent, and setting his teeth resolutely, Ned said to himself, as he strained every nerve and muscle in his sinewy frame to maintain the lead of his red pursuers:

"I'll give those copper-colored rascals a good race if I am run down and captured in the end."

The adventurous young wheelman knew not but what he was engaged in a race for life, and this thought nerved him to surprising efforts, and lent him an inspiration which a race under other conditions could not possibly impart.

Those who had witnessed his remarkable performance at the grand bicycle tournament of which he had made himself the hero would have been astonished could they have witnessed his achievements in the way of speed now.

But the mustangs ridden by the red centaurs behind him, though small, shaggy animals, as are all their breed, are exceedingly fleet and tireless.

Moreover, the Comanches' ponies were perfectly fresh, whereas Ned was weary, for he had ridden more than fifty miles that day over a level and rolling prairie.

The conditions of the race were unequal; and granted that the champion wheelman could have left his pursuers in the lurch had the trial of speed taken place early in the day, it was a question of he could do so now.

The issue remained in uncertainty for some time, but gradually, and almost imperceptibly at first, the redskins began to gain upon the bicyclist. It was a strange and thrilling spectacle, such as had never been witnessed upon the great prairie before, though the scene was no doubt one of many a foray, wild flight and desperate encounter.

The exciting race was witnessed by one spectator, who, though he assumed no part in it, watched both pursuers and pursued with absorbing interest.

The swarthy stranger whom Ned had observed along the route so many times, and whom he believed had sought to poison him at the wayside inn, was really Blanchard. He crouched in the depression whence the Indians who had lain in ambush there had ridden forth.

"They will capture him! Ha! Ned Worth is doomed. I have bribed the rascally chief Lone Horse, whom I met at the army post yesterday, to lay in wait for the young man

and capture him. Now the redskins are gaining on him every moment."

The monologue uttered by Ralph Bentley's villainous emissary was an explanation of the hostile demonstration made by the Comanches.

Blanchard had bribed the sub-chief, Lone Horse, to capture Ned and hold him a prisoner for three months.

During that period the doubly treacherous villain anticipated that the public in general, and Ralph Bentley in particular, would settle down to the conviction that the young wheelman had perished.

Such a result would enable Blanchard to claim the bonus which Bentley had agreed to pay him in the event of Ned's death en route.

Onward the wheelman continued to speed in his race for life.

The unwelcome conviction forced itself upon him that he must soon be overtaken, and as the Indians drew nearer and yet nearer, he resolved to make a fight, desperate and hopeless as it seemed the result must be.

Leaping from his wheel, Ned placed himself behind it, and, drawing one of his revolvers, he leveled it over the seat or saddle of his bicycle.

The succeeding moment the Comanches adopted their peculiar and invariable method of attack.

The red warriors began to ride around Ned in a wide circle, keeping constantly just out of pistol shot.

Still they did not fire upon the wheelman, and suddenly Lone Horse, the chief, who spoke broken English, called out: "White man surrender; no kill—no hurt."

The Comanches, with the long-range rifles which they carried, could easily have shot Ned down where he stood, while yet he was unable to reach them with a pistol shot, as he well knew.

Upon a moment's reflection Ned decided that, after all, in this instance discretion was the better part of valor, and mentally recalling his decision to make a fight, he replied:

"There is peace between us. Why does Lone Horse act as an enemy?"

The redskin's only answer was a guttural "Ugh!"

But presently, after conversing with his braves, the chief again called out, sternly, and in impatient tones:

"The man who rides on a wheel must surrender, or we kill quick."

This was certainly decisive. There was no opportunity for further discussion, and prompted by a most commendable desire to save his scalp, Ned dropped his weapon, and held up his empty hands in token of capitulation.

Then the savages rode forward. But they seemed to regard his bicycle with superstitious awe, and none of them ventured to touch it.

"Bad medicine," grunted one old savage significantly as he regarded the bicycle with a distrustful look.

Ned was disarmed, and a lasso was cast loosely over his shoulders, while one of the red riders held the end of it.

Then Lone Horse ordered Ned to mount "the wheel horse." He obeyed. The band then rode northward with Ned in their midst, and his hands and feet being at liberty, he experienced no difficulty in propelling the machine. The brave who held the end of the lasso whose loop encircled Ned's shoulders gave him the by no means pleasing admonition that in the event of his making an attempt at escape the lasso would be jerked tightly about his throat, and he would be dragged at its end. This prospect naturally deterred Ned from the thought of making a "spurt" with his wheel when he had a chance.

The Comanches went into camp just after night-fall.

Ned was exhausted, and making a meal from the contents of his haversack, which the Indians had not meddled with, he rolled himself up in his blanket and soon fell asleep, surrounded by his captors.

The young traveler had not slept long when he was aroused by the sound of an arrival, and almost immediately a large band of Comanches, who were evidently on a buffalo hunt, since they had their squaws and pack-ponies laden with teepee poles with them, rode up.

"Wahhatan, the head chief!" exclaimed Lone Horse, in tones of consternation, as he beheld the great chief of the Comanches at the head of the hunting party.

"Lay still or Lone Horse kill!"

"He doesn't want his superior to see me. He thinks he will not approve of his conduct in capturing me," thought Ned, and so, as soon as Wahhatan dismounted and entered the camp, the wheelman, disregarding the admonition of Lone

Horse, sprang to his feet and, gaining the side of the head chief, he cried:

"Lone Horse has made war upon the white man and taken him a prisoner! The great father at Washington will be angry, for the treaty has been broken, and when the winter comes he will send the chief no blankets, no supplies, unless you let the white man whom he has sent go in peace."

Wahhatan's brow darkened, and a frown contracted his brow as he said sternly to Lone Horse:

"The warrior has done wrong. Why has he broken a treaty? The white man shall go his way. Wahhatan has spoken."

Lone Horse made no protest which Ned could understand, though in his own tongue he murmured some sullen excuse for his conduct.

Ned was afraid that Wahhatan might reconsider his decision, and so he sprang upon his bicycle and rode away without a word, save a brief expression of gratitude, thus:

"Thank you, chief."

Leaving the Indian encampment, Ned retraced his way to the railroad, and he rode several miles along it. Finally, however, he went into camp and slept very soundly. Meantime Blanchard had followed the Indians when they rode away with Ned.

He had rolled himself up in his blanket and laid down in the prairie grass when they went into camp. The scoundrel witnessed the arrival of the head chief of the Comanches and the release of Ned.

He was enraged, but he followed Ned, and he said to himself:

"I am not baffled yet."

CHAPTER V,

AN AWFUL PERIL.

It was a bright moonlight night, and the mellow, silvery radiance bathed the illimitable prairie, resting upon the sea of verdure undulating in the night breeze like a halo. Serene and peaceful was the scene, and the quietude was almost complete. But as Ned Worth slept, his head pillowed upon the saddle of his bicycle, with only the stars in the firmament above to keep watch and ward over his solitary resting-place, a shadow, the reflection of a stealthily moving human form, fell across the body of the reposeful wheelman.

But he does not awaken, for the man who is stealing upon him makes no sound.

Besides this silent man, who is really the villainous Blanchard, there is an instance of animal life near by.

The rascal has left his horse at a short distance in the rear.

The expression upon Blanchard's swarthy and evil face is alone sufficient to give the assurance that he is bent upon a dastardly mission.

Nearer and nearer to the solitary sleeper creeps the hireling of his foe, and thus while in dreams Ned is surrounded by friends, and all danger is far away, a menacing peril is approaching nearer and nearer with the lapse of each second of time.

Will he awaken in time?

Hark! Upon the silence breaks a sound. It is the neigh of Blanchard's horse. Ah, this is fortunate for Ned. The sound startles him. He awakens. He starts to his feet and glances about him. Blanchard sinks down into the tall prairie grass.

But he is discovered.

Ned sees him.

Brief and momentary as is his glance, he recognizes the scoundrel as the moonlight falls upon his face.

"My mysterious enemy!"

Thus ejaculated the young man under his breath.

Ned comprehended that the swarthy villain was bent upon some evil design. He believed that his life was in danger, in fact.

But he experienced little alarm. He felt competent to defend himself in an encounter, and deeming one now inevitable, he drew a revolver, and, crouching down in the grass, he waited for the other to inaugurate hostilities.

But he did not do so.

At heart Blanchard was a coward.

He feared to meet Ned in a solitary duel or hand-to-hand combat.

He stole away under cover of the grass, and a moment later reached his horse.

The first intimation Ned received of the retreat of Blanchard was when he sprang upon his horse.

The animal was beyond pistol range.

Blanchard rode swiftly away, and Ned watched him until he was lost to view in the far distance.

Then he lay down again and slept until the sunlight awoke him, as the luminary of day searched out the shadows and chased them away.

From the provisions which his haversack still contained Ned made his breakfast, and then he resumed his journey.

The character of the country which he was traversing continued the same for some distance, and Ned caught sight of a herd of buffalo in the distance.

A gray wolf which had been prowling along the track of the railway skurried off at his approach.

As far as the eye could reach, however, the wheelman could discern no evidence of human life. He alone was the one evidence of humanity upon the vast expanse as far as he could discover, and he hoped that he had left the swarthy villain whom he had come to dread behind him for good.

Not long after the sun sank from sight beyond the western horizon the face of the country began to change, and Ned found himself among the foothills of an inconsiderable range of mountains—an outlying spur of the great rocky range, far distant as yet.

Ned determined to press forward for a few hours of the night, and as it was quite dark he alighted, and after trimming his bicycle lantern he put it in place and ignited it. The illumination thus secured lighted the way in advance of the wheelman for a short distance very well.

The track of the railway wound in among the hills, threading defiles, and making many a sudden and abrupt curve, showing that the engineer had taken advantage of the formation of the country in laying the course of the railway.

The wheeling now became more difficult, and several times Ned alighted and "trundled" the bicycle as he ran beside it to rest his legs.

He had been following the winding, tortuous course of the railroad for some distance among the hills, when, upon turning a sharp curve, he came out upon a stretch of high trestling which extended for a long distance across a yawning chasm.

Ned paused for a moment as he reached the beginning of the trestling, and the roar of a rushing stream which made its course along the side of the railway rang in his ears above the shrill calls of a number of night birds in the tree-tops.

A fall from the high trestling meant certain death. But in the center of the track, extending the entire distance across the trestling between the rails, a plank about twelve inches in width had been placed for the accommodation of the trackmen, who were sometimes necessitated to cross on foot in order to make repairs.

Ned considered for a moment, and then he decided to ride his bicycle across the trestling on the single plank.

To an expert, such as our young traveler was, this feat did not seem at all difficult.

Ned glanced behind him before he started to cross the trestle, but as the reflection of his bicycle lantern was not cast to the rear, all was darkness there, and only a few yards of the track was indistinctly visible, and the rest of the railway lay beyond the abrupt curve which he had just passed. On either side the rocky walls arose to a considerable height, and beyond the trestle, as he turned his face westward, Ned thought he saw among the dark shadows the outlines of the entrance of another cut.

Whistling blithely, Ned started forward over the trestling.

He had traversed half the distance, and perhaps a trifle more, when he heard the shrill shriek of a locomotive, and turning his head and glancing backward, he saw the light from the headlight of a locomotive, as a railway train rounded the curve and came rushing forward over the trestling straight down upon him.

The sharp curve at the end of the bridge had concealed the approach of the train, and the noise of the rushing mountain stream had drowned the sound of its wheels.

The glaring light almost blinded Ned as it fell full upon him. The engineer discovered him as the locomotive rounded the curve and came thundering down upon the trestling.

Instantly the engineer reversed the lever, and the automatic air-brakes with which the cars were provided, were thrown on.

Every possible effort was made by the engineer to check the speed of the locomotive and save the young adventurer.

A cry of horror emanated from Ned's lips as he saw the locomotive dash into view and come rushing down upon him.

His blood seemed turning to ice in his veins under the benumbing influence of this great and mighty horror.

But he did not pause an instant.

His bicycle seemed to suddenly shoot forward along the single plank as though impelled by the impetus of a catapult.

The great burnished wheel had never been revolved so rapidly before under any circumstances.

Ned never looked back again.

Every moment he expected the end would come, and he thought of the loved ones he had left at home, and a prayer was in his heart for deliverance.

It was like a terrible nightmare—a dream of unutterable horror.

How he passed the trestle Ned knew not. He was conscious only that death in a terrible form was close behind him, reaching out to clutch him. He knew only that he was fleeing madly, hopelessly from the grim monster. He realized vaguely that he hurled himself from the track with his wheel. Then there was a roar of wheels, a flash of light, Ned reeled against a rocky wall and the train sped past him.

The young wheelman remained dazed, weak and half-fainting for some moments, and he could scarcely believe that he had in reality escaped the great and awful peril which had pressed him so closely.

But such was the fact. The prompt action of the engineer and trainmen had retarded the speed of the locomotive somewhat, and owing to this fact the wonderful, almost supernatural, speed which Ned had attained carried him across the trestling before he was overtaken.

Ned had learned a lesson, and one that he meant to profit by and never forget. Never again would he ride on the track where it wound in frequent curves among the mountains like those he had passed.

The wheelman was devoutly grateful for his escape.

It was some little time before he again resumed his way, for the thrilling and dreadful experience through which he had passed had left him weak and nerveless.

The sound of the train died away in the distance and silence reigned again, but suddenly Ned heard a sound above his head, and glancing up, he saw a mountain sheep grazing down upon him with great, wondering eyes.

The succeeding instant the report of a rifle rang out from the mountain-side, and the mountain sheep rolled down from rock to rock and fell at Ned's feet, shot through the head.

Then two Indian hunters came leaping into view, and as they appeared, Ned, who had no wish to encounter them, sprang upon his bicycle and shot forward at a rapid rate of speed. The Indians saw him and watched him out of sight in surprise and awe.

Ned reached a telegraph station that night, and found quarters with the operator, who had heard of his coming. Before he retired the wheelman sent a dispatch to Chicago, and he also wrote an account of his adventures for *The National Wheelman*.

Ned was up bright and early the next morning and soon resumed his trip. His journey for the following days was devoid of any very exciting adventures, and we shall omit mention of same.

CHAPTER VI.

CALIFORNIA—NED EMBARKS FOR JAPAN.

Ned's next stop worthy of mention was at San Francisco, where he arrived in very good shape, considering the long grind he had been subject to.

In San Francisco Ned was feted by the wheelmen, and he found that his tour across the plains on a bicycle had made him quite a hero in the eyes of the world.

If such a trip, which Ned was not inclined to consider much of an achievement, sufficed to bring him fame, how much greater might he become if he made the tour of the great world.

The wheelman found San Francisco very similar to other maritime cities, and yet there were certain peculiar institutions which were distinctively its own.

No city of the Western Continent has as large a Mongolian population, and in the Chinese quarters Ned saw some singular sights. However, as he hoped soon to observe the China-

men in their native land, he did not consume much time in sight-seeing among the Celestials. He did drop in at a Chinese theatre, but the execrable din of the tom-tom and two-stringed violins soon drove him out again.

The bicycle tourist was fortunate in securing passage on board an English steamer bound for Yokohama, Japan. The steamer was named the Adriatic, and was commanded by Captain John Batterson.

The day Ned began his voyage across the Pacific Ocean was a cloudless and delightful one. A large concourse of wheelmen and public-spirited citizens, who felt interested in the young American, through their national pride, assembled at the wharf and bade him Godspeed, and cheered him heartily.

Ned watched the receding shores until the Golden Gate and famous harbor of the metropolis of the Pacific coast faded from sight upon the horizon, and then he turned his attention to the vessel and the world of waters all about him.

The Adriatic was a stanch ship, and she proceeded on her way majestically. There was but about a score of passengers on board, and among them was an aged minister who was going out to Japan as a missionary, and his daughter, a beautiful maiden with a face as sweet and pure as a Madonna, accompanied him. Ned made the acquaintance of father and daughter through an introduction by the captain, and the pretty girl, who had heard the story of the young wheelman's proposed trip around the world, was evidently very much interested in him.

The first day out, as Ned was entering the main saloon, he suddenly recoiled with a half-stifled exclamation of surprise.

Reflected in the large mirror set in the side of the saloon, Ned saw Blanchard, his secret enemy, who was gliding toward his—Ned's—stateroom behind the young man's back.

The discovery that his enemy was on board the same ship with himself made Ned apprehensive of evil, but noting the direction in which the stealthy rascal was proceeding, the young wheelman silently closed the door of the saloon without entering it, and stealthily followed Blanchard.

The latter went straight to the door of Ned's stateroom, and, producing a bunch of skeleton keys, attempted to unlock the door.

Then Ned darted forward, and seizing Blanchard by the collar, he wheeled him about, and they came face to face.

"You infernal scoundrel! I've caught you at last, and now you shall give an account of yourself, or I'll thrash you as you deserve." The young Hercules again shook the cowardly villain.

"I don't know you, I don't understand," he whined.

"Yes, you do. You have tracked me across the continent, and sought to annoy, delay and, I suspect, murder me. Just now you meant to enter my stateroom for the purpose of stealing my credentials and letters of credit, so that when I reached Japan I could not proceed any further, I've no doubt."

"You are mistaken in the person, and I mistook your stateroom for my own," replied Blanchard.

"You lie!" thundered Ned.

"Help! Murder!" shrieked the villain, vainly striving to wrench away from Ned, who held him in a grip of iron.

A moment later the captain of the vessel and several seamen and passengers appeared upon the scene. The door of a stateroom opened and the missionary's pretty daughter, who had witnessed the entire scene through the door which she had held slightly ajar, came out.

"Release that man!" ordered the captain, addressing Ned.

The young wheelman reluctantly obeyed.

"He meant to murder me! See, here is the knife with which he tried to murder me! See, his name is on it," said Blanchard, and he exhibited a knife which Ned had lost on the plains.

ing his real character, had ingratiated himself into his confidence.

Naturally Captain Batterson was inclined to favor his fellow countryman, whom he regarded as a prime "good fellow."

"Ah, ha! So you would do murder on board my good ship, you young villain?" said Captain Batterson, as he examined the knife which Blanchard had placed in his hand, and read Ned's name, which was stamped on the handle of the weapon.

"No, sir. I did not draw a weapon. I caught this fellow, whom I know to be a scoundrel and who has sought to injure me, attempting to open the door of my stateroom with a false key. Naturally I seized him, and demanded that he should give an account of himself. As to the knife, which he affirms I attempted to stab him with, I lost that on the plains while attempting to escape from a band of redskins, who I believe this rascal set upon my trail," said Ned.

"His words are all false. He has sworn to murder me on account of jealousy. All this grew out of an old love affair. For heaven's sake, put him in irons, captain, or my life will not be safe for a moment on board your ship," retorted Blanchard.

He was an admirable actor, and he played his part well.

Captain Batterson was inclined to believe his fellow countryman, and turning to his men he ordered them to seize Ned and place him in irons.

"Never while I can strike a blow!" shouted the daring and heroic young wheelman, while Blanchard's swarthy face assumed an expression of exultation.

Ned placed himself in an attitude of defense.

The seamen hesitated for a moment as they noted the evidences of herculean power which the gladiatorial yet elegant and statuesque form of the young man presented.

"What are you waiting for? Seize him, men!" thundered the English captain, impatiently.

"Hold, captain! I saw it all, and the young wheelman, Mr. Worth, is in the right!" cried a musical voice, and the missionary's pretty daughter ran to Captain Batterson's side and interposed between Ned and the advancing seamen.

"Yes, my cabin door was ajar. I saw that man who accuses Mr. Worth come stealing along on tiptoe. He acted just like a thief. Then when he reached the door of the stateroom, he did try to open it with a false key. Mr. Worth came, and, seizing him, demanded what he was doing. Then the fellow set up the cry that brought you here," the missionary's daughter continued.

"And did not Mr. Worth draw his knife?" asked the captain.

"No, sir. He did not. Blanchard had that in his own pocket, and I saw him pull it out and drop it on the floor before he picked it up."

"Yes. Fortunately the young lady can testify in my favor. If you search the wretch, whose face now clearly betrays his guilt, you will find a bunch of skeleton keys in his pocket," said Ned.

The captain knew that the missionary's daughter would not tell an untruth even to save her own life, and he noted that Blanchard's face had paled, and that he wore an expression of fear and guilt.

He ordered his men to search Blanchard, and they obeyed. In his pockets were found two bunches of skeleton keys, a pick-lock and several small files.

The captain was convinced that the rascal was in fault, and he, instead of Ned, was placed in irons.

The young wheelman expressed his gratitude to the beautiful girl whose testimony had exculpated him, and had his affection not been enlisted elsewhere he might have fallen in love with the sweet girl, whose noble nature was reflected in every feature.

Ned told the captain the story of Blanchard's persecutions and the honest Englishman vowed he ought to be made walk the plank.

Blanchard was a prisoner during the entire voyage, and as he remained in the dreary solitude, to which he had been doomed by his own deed, he brooded constantly upon vengeance and plotted to work out some terrible doom for Ned, whom he was now growing to hate on his own account.

The voyage of the Adriatic was a prosperous one. The vessel touched at the coaling station of the Sandwich Islands, and no further incident worthy of special notice in this record of the young bicycle tourist's journey occurred thereafter until Yokohama, in Japan, was reached. The Adriatic entered the harbor of Yokohama one pleasant morning, and Ned eagerly scanned the shores of the "Mikado's kingdom."

The scenery beyond the city, which presented an uninteresting appearance, was characteristic and beautiful. Cot-

CHAPTER VII.

PURSUED BY COOLIES.

Ned was astounded by the accusation made by Blanchard. He knew that the scoundrel must have found his knife on the plains where he had lost it, and that his seeming to find it on the floor now was a deception.

Blanchard was a full-blooded "Britisher," and he had made Captain Batterson's acquaintance on shore. The two had fraternized, being both Englishmen, and both natives of New-castle.

Batterson was an honest man, and Blanchard, by conceal-

tages made of light wood, with roofs like that of a pagoda, surrounded by bamboo balconies and embowered among luxuriant foliage, abounded.

Inland were the fragrant tea gardens and rice fields.

Ned was one of the first to land, and mounting his wheel, he set out for the office of the United States Consul, to which Captain Batterson had directed him. The old seaman had long been engaged in the Japan trade, and he was quite familiar with the place.

The inhabitants congregated in crowds upon the street as Ned rode along on his bicycle, for they had never seen the like before.

A band of naked coolies who had first sighted Ned at the wharf where they assemble when a ship comes in, hoping to obtain work as porters, followed the young wheelman, shouting and jeering.

Just at this time there was some ill-feeling between the Japanese and the English, though the most amicable relations existed between the United States and the empire of the Mikado.

Since Ned had arrived on an English vessel, it is probable that the coolies took him for one of that race. Urged on, no doubt, by spectators of the more respectable classes, who had no love for the British, the coolies finally became somewhat hostile in their demonstrations as they followed Ned through the narrow streets of the quaint old city.

The naked rascals pressed the young wheelman close, and they soon began to pelt him with mud and stones which they picked up out of the street.

Ned paid little heed to the insulting conduct of the naked mob behind him, as he made as swiftly as possible for the building which was his destination.

But finally a heavy stone struck him on the leg and stung to anger by the pain of the blow, and seeing that the coolies began to think he was afraid of them, Ned determined to show the swarthy scoundrels that they were in error.

Accordingly he dismounted and presented a revolver at the crowd.

He had no need to discharge it.

The coolies knew what the weapon was, and they scampered away more expeditiously than they had come. Ned laughed at the ludicrous sight.

He made his way to the office of the United States Consul unmolested after this, and, having introduced himself, he was made welcome.

The minister procured a passport for the young wheelman, which gave him authority to travel in the Empire of Japan wherever he pleased. He also cashed Ned's letter of credit on Japanese banks, and gave him a good deal of valuable information.

It chanced that the Mikado, or Emperor, and his staff were at Yokohama, and Ned was presented to the royal family. The emperor and his sons, two educated young men, expressed a desire to see Ned ride, and, much to the delight of the royal family, he gave them an exhibition of his skill. The young princes were enthusiastic in their admiration of the bicycle and its accomplished rider. Indeed, they sought to engage Ned to remain with them, and offered him a large salary to teach them to ride the bicycle.

Of course, the young wheelman declined this honor.

After Ned had given an exhibition of bicycle riding he was invited to a Japanese feast at which fish, rice cooked in half a dozen ways, and a variety of fruits were the principal dishes, and a native wine and the best tea Ned had ever tasted served as drink. The Japanese have far outstripped their neighbors, the Chinese, in the race of educational advancement and civilization.

With the ending of the old Tycoon dynasty in 1868, and since the new dynasty came into power, with the Mikado as political as well as spiritual head of the State, Japan had taken rapid forward strides.

Much of the bigotry and superstition which shut out the light of reason and knowledge has been swept away, and the Japanese seek to emulate the most civilized of European States.

Ned left Yokohama and started to make a rapid journey across the empire.

At first he traversed an open, level country, and he observed more than one castle of stone which we would find it difficult to reproduce to-day, in spite of our engineering achievements. These castles were constructed in ancient times, and the Japanese, and also the Chinese, have since lost the art of moving such massive blocks of stone as those which compose the walls of the old castles.

Ned saw some native soldiers at a station by the way, and as he approached they came out into the road.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHINA—NED STARTS FOR THE INTERIOR—BLANCHARD.

Ned could not speak a word of the native language, nor could he understand it when he heard it. The soldiers who came out of the station as he approached made significant gestures, and called out to him to halt.

Though Ned did not understand what they said, their gestures served to convey their meaning. He stopped, and when he had shown his papers he was allowed to proceed.

Ned made a dinner at a tea plantation, which consisted of a raw turnip, rice, tea, and sweet meat, made of sweet beans.

In the afternoon a jinriksha, or two-wheeled carriage, drawn by coolies, and containing a Japanese lady and gentleman clad in rich robes of flowing silk, passed him.

The coolies chattered and laughed as they ran at a swinging trot, and seemed to know no fatigue.

To see men assuming the part of horses was to Ned an odd sight, but he was in a land of novelties, and he had looked for surprises of all sorts.

Ned made as direct a course as possible across the island of Japan.

In his route he passed Mount Fuji and the coast range beyond, which rises from the edge of the water to a picturesque height. Quaint temples peep out from behind the trees at every point which commands a good view.

The priests really govern this mountain region, as Ned learned, though it is a rich tea-growing country.

Of course, Ned's transit across the island was attended by many incidents. The natives always thronged forth to see him, but he was not molested, for by the advice of the American consul he carried a small American flag, so the populace would not mistake him for an Englishman.

Once Ned turned aside from his route to visit the "Temple of the Moon," of which he had heard many remarkable stories. The way from the road which Ned had been traversing to this celebrated and ancient temple lay through beautiful groves and up the slopes of majestic hills.

The temple itself is situated far up among the mountains. It is a large building of stone, shaped something like a mosque in Turkey, and it is surrounded by tea houses where weary pilgrims refresh themselves.

In the center of the temple hung a large gong. Upon this each pilgrim pounded, and Ned learned this was to call the attention of the deity they saw fit to invoke. When the pilgrim feels satisfied that the bell has been answered he goes down on his knees and offers his prayers.

The pilgrims were inclined to regard Ned and his bicycle as "a thing of evil," and the priests of the temple ordered him away.

Ned encountered a traveler on the road after leaving the temple, who proved to be a Jesuit missionary. He was a stern old Frenchman, but he spoke English well, and from him Ned gained some information about points of interest which could be seen without going out of his way much.

A colossal statue of Buddha was visited by Ned. This statue is one of the great marvels of Japan. The huge image of a man seated with legs crossed towers so high that the tops of a grove of tall trees in which it stands only reach its shoulders.

As Ned drew near the coast of the beautiful sheet of water called the Sea of Japan, which separates the Mikado's empire from China and Southern Siberia, the face of the country changed in appearance. Lowlands abounded and he saw workmen standing in the tea fields up to their knees in the water which flooded the plantations.

Finally the young wheelman reached the city of Tsuruga, on the shore of the Sea of Japan.

Repairing to a tea house to dine, he there met a Japanese trader, who addressed him in excellent English, saying:

"Your friend is coming after you."

"What do you mean?" asked Ned in surprise.

"Why, I have just arrived. On the way I passed a man who is an Englishman. He described you and was making inquiries for you everywhere."

"And he said he was my friend?"

"Yes."

Ned's thoughts reverted to Blanchard. The English captain had assured him that he would not permit Blanchard to land until the vessel was ready to depart.

"What did the man look like who was searching for me?" Ned asked of the Japanese.

The merchant described Blanchard to the letter.

"Well, I shall be out of Japan before the wretch overtakes me, for I sail for China this night. The fellow is as tenacious in following me as was the Old Man of the Mountains in clinging to the back of Sinbad the Sailor," said Ned to himself.

He then invited the Japanese merchant to dine with him, and they were attended by two simpering and wriggling Japanese waitresses, who were inclined to treat Ned with a degree of affection which he did not appreciate.

The dinner was served by the two nymphs, and the courses followed each other in dainty lackered bowls. Chopsticks were used with every course, and Ned laughed as he tried to manipulate his soup with them.

That same evening Ned embarked on a quaint little steamer which plied between the Japanese ports and Shanghai, China.

Before embarking Ned was informed by his friend, the Japanese merchant, that this steamer, which was built by the natives, blew up frequently.

This cheerful bit of information did not deter the young man from embarking, however, and good fortune favored him.

The little primitive craft made the voyage across the beautiful little sea, through the Strait of Corea, and thence to Shanghai in safety.

The young tourist landed in China feeling none the worse for his long journey by land and sea.

Ned, as usual, found the United States consul the first thing, and his countryman accorded him a very cordial reception. The young wheelman informed the consul of his intention to cross China on his bicycle, whereupon the official became very much excited and advised Ned to turn back and abandon his project.

"The natives of the interior will murder you. You are not in Japan now, remember. Even in the most peaceful times travelers are not safe in certain portions of China, unless attended by a strong escort. The Keun-Lun mountains between this city and the great desert of Gobi swarm with fierce robbers. No, no, young man, you must turn back, for if you go on you go to your death," said the consul earnestly.

"Still I must go on. If necessary, can I not procure an escort?"

"No. The recent barbarities practised in California and Oregon and elsewhere on the Pacific coast upon the Chinese are known here. Throughout China there is now as strong a feeling against Americans as there is in Japan against England."

"But I have the means to pay an escort."

"It matters not. You are an American."

"But I will turn English for the nonce. The American flag carried me safely through Japan. I'll try the English colors here, since the Stars and Stripes are not in favor."

"By George! I didn't think of that. You may get along safely among all but the wild robbers by that course. The English consul is a personal friend of mine. I admire your pluck, my young countryman; and having done my duty by warning you of the perils ahead, if you are still determined to press on, I will get the English consul to present you as a British subject to the passport officers, and so you may get your papers to protect you in the interior," said the consul.

Ned thanked him.

The consul was as good as his word.

He introduced Ned to the English consul, who in turn introduced the young wheelman to the Chinese authorities.

As an Englishman he was granted passports, and then he took a look about the city, and made his preparations for a bicycle ride through a country which, perhaps, no European traveler had ever visited.

Meanwhile, Ralph Bentley's sleuth-hound had trailed Ned closely.

From Yokohama Blanchard tracked the bicycle tourist across Japan without the least difficulty. The bicycle gave Ned such prominence that every one along the route remembered him, and probably to this day they have not forgotten "the young man who rode on the wheels and drew himself."

The day succeeding the one which witnessed the embarkation of Ned Worth for China, Blanchard took passage on a Chinese junk for Shanghai, and he arrived in that city the day after Ned, after making all needful preparations and purchasing a variety of articles, including a repeating rifle

and a quantity of ammunition, set out upon his journey into the interior.

Blanchard found out the route Ned had taken, and as he set about making preparations to pursue him there was in his heart the vindictive determination that Ned should not leave China alive.

More remarkable and thrilling adventures than any he had previously encountered were soon to befall Ned now.

The young wheelman was soon to prove himself a hero in, very deed.

CHAPTER IX.

A SAND STORM.

Ned, though in great haste to continue his journey while Blanchard was not yet in China, did not rush away without a guide, for he could not expect to find his way through that unknown land alone.

The young adventurer was quite fortunate in securing the services of an intelligent young native who rejoiced in the cognomen of "Sam Ling."

This name Ned usually abbreviated to Sam.

The Chinese guide was recommended to Ned by the English consul, who knew him. Sam Ling had been an extensive traveler for a Chinaman. For years, though, as we have stated, he was yet young, he had traveled with the tea merchants and their long droves of dromedaries or camels, laden with sacks of tea. They cross China, traverse Tartary, and travel far into Siberia with their cargo for Russia.

Sam Ling had acquired a knowledge of the Russian and English languages, and he also spoke a variety of Chinese dialects, and was well posted about the country which the bicycle tourist wished to traverse.

Ned and Sam traveled through the principal parts of the Chinese Empire without adventure worth recalling, and soon struck the sand desert of China.

They proceeded over the trackless sea of yellow sand for a day without the occurrence of any adventure which need be recorded.

The second day toward noon, however, Sam Ling abruptly halted his camel, and shouted to Ned, who found it hard wheeling over the sand, and had fallen in the rear.

Ned hastened forward.

He soon overtook Sam Ling.

"What is it, Sam? Why did you call out? Why, you look frightened!" he said, as he observed the expression upon the guide's features.

"Sam scared all samee muchee. Sand storm coming!" replied the Chinaman.

As he spoke he pointed to the westward.

Ned followed with a glance the direction thus indicated, and he saw a singular sight. A dark mass stretching from earth to sky was advancing over the sandy desert. The young tourist knew it was a cloud of sand, and he knew that whole caravans were sometimes overwhelmed and buried from sight forever by such storms as this.

The sand storm was approaching with incredible velocity.

Flight would be useless, for they would surely be overtaken. Ned gazed appalled, and for once his heart completely failed him because he could discern no way of escape.

But Sam Ling had crossed the desert before in the caravan of the tea merchants, and he was quick to suggest a procedure which promised a slight chance of escape.

At a short distance in advance of the travelers was a high sand dune or hill of sand which had been formed by the winds.

Pointing to the dune, Sam cried:

"Come. We gettee back of sand hill. Maybe not muchee sand cover us if keep close there."

Ned caught the idea.

He wheeled swiftly forward.

In a moment he and Sam, with the camel and bicycle, were crouching close against the sand hill on the side away from the direction in which the simoon of the desert was sweeping down toward them.

With a roaring, rushing sound it came onward and struck the sand hill and swept over it. The air was filled with sand, the gloom of night seemed suddenly cast upon the scene, and for moments of time which seemed like hours the travelers were under the sand cloud.

But the hill against which they crouched had broken the force of the sand hurricane at that particular point, and they were saved, though when the tornado had passed they found themselves half suffocated and buried in the sand.

It was not a difficult matter to extricate themselves, and they soon did so and resumed their journey.

The passage of the desert was made in safety after this adventure, and the young wheelman and his guide crossed the Altai Mountains, which divide China from Siberia, and entered the latter country.

The wild scenery of Russia's northeastern province was new and novel to Ned, and by means of his bicycle camera he took a number of views as he went along.

Though winter had not yet come in America it was all snow and ice in the frozen land of Siberia.

Ned had read much of this land of the exiles whom the czar doomed to the prison mines, and he wondered if it would be his fortune to learn anything about the unfortunate victims of a tyrant's cruelty and injustice.

In Siberia no one can travel without a passport, and as Ned and Sam Ling were emerging from the Altai Mountains they were suddenly halted in a narrow pass by two mounted Cossacks with leveled carbines.

These men informed Ned that they were the patrol—representatives of the czar who guard the mountains—and demanded his passports.

Ned showed his documents which proved he was a citizen of the United States, and stated that he was without a passport, but desired to procure one.

Russia has always been friendly to the United States. The fact that Ned was an American was in his favor. He was escorted to a patrol station, where a bronzed and weather-beaten old Russian justice gave him a passport, and he and Sam Ling once more proceeded on their way.

At the close of a day, while they were traversing bleak steppes, they sighted two men who staggered out of a snow-clad thicket and fell upon their knees before them.

The two strangers were clothed in rags, and their faces were pale and pinched. Everything in their appearance indicated that they were perishing of cold and famine.

Before Ned and Sam Ling entered Siberia the latter sold his camel to a Chinese trader on the border, and now, while Ned, in order to honorably perform his task, rode his bicycle, Sam Ling rode in a comfortable sledge drawn by three little shaggy but tough and swift-footed Russian horses. In the sledges were also carried provisions and supplies.

"For the love of heaven, render us assistance. Give us food or we die!" cried one of the wild and miserable looking men who had fallen down in the snow before Ned.

The young tourist leaped from his wheel, while Sam Ling pulled up his team.

Raising one of the men, who seemed too weak to regain his feet unassisted, while the other staggered up, Ned produced a pocket flask and poured some liquor down his throat. Ned gave the poor fellow a drink of good American whisky, and it seemed to revivify and put new life into him immediately. The other stranger accepted the flask and took a strong pull at it. Then Ned said:

"Get out some canned meat and hardtack and cheese, and give these poor men all they want."

Sam Ling produced the food mentioned, and the two strangers ate ravenously. While they were thus engaged Ned questioned the men.

"Who are you and how comes it I find you in this sad plight?" he asked.

"We are merely travelers. Our sleigh and team were caught and buried under an avalanche, and we barely escaped with our lives," answered one of the men, while his eyes, which beamed with a wild and hunted light, glanced about afar over the steppes in every direction.

Ned had entertained a certain suspicion regarding these men from the first. He did not believe their story and before he could ask another question a shout was heard in the distance.

The two men started and trembled with terror. One of them clutched Ned's hand.

"You are not a Russian?" he cried.

"No, I am an American."

"Thank heavens! I implore you to help us. We are escaping exiles—unjustly doomed to the prison mines, and the men who are hunting us are coming," said the stranger.

CHAPTER X.

THE ARREST OF NED AND SAM LING.

Ned was always ready to champion the cause of the oppressed, and he did not hesitate now, though he was fully aware that he was running considerable risk.

"Jump into the sledge. I'll do the best I can for you, though I am afraid if I am found out your amiable czar will see that I do not get out of his territory very soon," he said.

"God will reward you!" cried one of the exiles, and the two fugitives leaped into the sledge.

Sam Ling did not like this.

The Chinaman had acquired some information about Siberia and the way affairs were conducted there during previous visits to the czar's empire with the tea traders.

The Celestial entered a protest.

"Me say velly muchee foollee do this. Russee man catchee, putee in prison. Same no likee. Sabe?"

"Yes, yes, but I cannot desert these poor wretches. It would be inhuman," replied Ned.

Then he addressed the escaping exiles.

"Crouch down in the bottom of the sledge," he said.

"Yes. Layee flattee. Sam cover with furs," the Chinaman directed.

The fugitives obeyed these injunctions.

Then Sam Ling carefully covered them with furs, and they were entirely concealed. No one would have suspected their presence unless they had witnessed the concealment.

Sam whipped up his team.

Ned worked the pedals of his bicycle.

The party continued onward.

But they had not proceeded far when a band of a dozen mounted Cossacks burst into view. The czar's watchdogs emerged from the snow-clad forest and came riding across the steppe.

In a few moments Ned and Sam were overtaken.

The heart of the young bicycle tourist beat fast. He experienced all the excitement and pain of suspense as he wondered if he was to be detected in his attempt to save the exiles.

"Halt!" thundered the leader of the Cossacks.

Ned stopped his wheel.

Sam drew up his spirited team.

"Have you seen anything of two men on foot hereabouts?" demanded the Cossack, and he eyed Ned and Sam Ling sharply and, as they imagined, suspiciously.

"What were the men like of whom you speak?" asked Ned. The Cossack minutely described the two fugitives.

"Ah! I thought so," said Ned.

"Then you saw them?"

"We certainly did see two men like those you speak of."

"Where are they? Which way did they go?"

"Southward into the woods yonder," replied Ned, pointing.

"Yes, manee run velly quickee all same dere," put in Sam, and he, too, pointed to the woods which Ned had indicated.

"Good! Those men are convicts, escaping. But we shall surely overtake them in the woods. Let me see your passport, traveler, and then you can proceed," said the Cossack. Ned showed his papers.

The Cossack glanced at them, and seeing that they were all right, he bowed, and then giving an order, he started forward at the head of his party in the direction which Ned and Sam Ling had assured him the fugitives who were concealed in the sledge had taken.

Ned and Sam hastened onward.

They did not feel secure yet, however, and they both almost constantly cast apprehensive glances toward the rear.

They feared that the Cossacks, failing to find the trail of the fugitives in the forest, would have their suspicions aroused.

The hours wore on, and the fears of Ned and Sam were not verified.

The night, which had closed down, was moonlit and the sky was studded with a myriad of stars. Silence, broken only for a time by the sighing of the wind which whirled the snow along the bleak steppes, reigned over the desolate and dreary scene, but an ominous sound borne on the breeze reached the hearing of the travelers at length.

Ned started and Sam Ling exclaimed:

"Wolves!"

The two fugitives raised themselves up from their hiding-place under the robes in the bottom of the sledge and turned

their pale and anxious faces in the direction whence the alarming sound of the wolfish voice emanated.

"A pack of famishing wolves have taken our trail!" cried one of the exiles.

His trembling voice betrayed his terror, which was the greater because of his physical weakness.

The howls of the wolves soon became a pandemonium of sounds, and the fierce animals were seen coming over the steppes in pursuit of Ned and his companions.

The Russian wolf is a fierce and ravenous animal. The northern part of that country is infested with these creatures, which become a terror to the traveler.

Flight did not enable them to distance the wolves, though they fled at their best speed. Soon the wolves were upon them.

Ned had placed his bicycle in the sledge and leaped into the vehicle himself.

While one of the exiles drove, Ned, Sam Ling and the other exile placed themselves in the back of the commodious sledge and opened fire upon the wolves with their revolvers and carbines.

But soon the wolves were all around the sledge, and it seemed the horses must be seized and dragged to the ground by the famishing horde.

At this moment of peril a terrible volley of carbine shots rang out from behind the wolves, and the succeeding moment a band of mounted men dashed up to the sledge, scattering the wolves and surrounding the vehicle.

Ned and his companion with feelings of dismay recognized the new arrivals. They were the Cossacks who were in pursuit of the exiles.

Of course the latter were now discovered.

The unfortunate men crouched trembling and terrified in the sledge. They knew resistance was useless now, and so when the Cossack leader presently in stern tones ordered them to alight from the sledge they obeyed.

The exiles were manacled by their captors, and while subordinates were doing this the chief of the band addressed Ned, saying in threatening tones:

"You are under arrest. You are guilty of aiding a convict to escape. You will find, young man, that you have committed a very serious offense. I've no doubt a few years' imprisonment will be your punishment."

"But I am an American citizen and ignorant of your laws, and besides, am I supposed to know the status of every traveler I meet?" said Ned.

The chief replied:

"You lied to me! You deliberately sent me on a false trail in pursuit of the men whom you had secreted in your sledge. Failing to find their trail in the snow of the forest, I finally determined to pursue you and search your sledge. The attack of the wolves saved me that trouble by causing the exiles to betray their presence," replied the Cossack.

"Samee say be all samee dis way," said the Chinaman resignedly.

The Cossack placed one of their number in the sledge to act as driver, and Ned and Sam Ling were both manacled and deposited in the bottom of the vehicle. The recaptured exiles were also thrust into the sledge, and then the captors of the bicycle tourist and his friend hurried them away.

Before dawn a prison mine surrounded by a small village was reached. Ned and Sam Ling were thrust into the ostrog or prison of the village, where exiles are temporarily confined, while the recaptured convicts were returned to the mines whence they had escaped.

Ned felt very despondent. The despair and anxiety which he felt at being placed in such a situation and unable to proceed on his journey very nearly unnerved him.

In that frozen prison land there were no friends to intercede for him, and months or years might elapse before he could escape, if he ever succeeded in doing so.

All at once the two prisoners, Ned and Sam Ling, heard the sound of heavy footsteps outside their cell, and a stern voice said:

"So the young fellow claiming to be an American is really a Nihilist spy."

prison mines, where he and Sam Ling had been confined, the young wheelman experienced the greatest anxiety and alarm.

To the faithful Chinaman who shared his captivity he whispered:

"Did you hear that, Sam? Somebody said I was a Nihilist spy!"

"Yes, Samee hear all samee. Maybe Blanchard tell that lie," replied the Celestial, to whom Ned had related all about his foe.

"Blanchard! Ah! It is possible, and surely only an enemy could have made such an accusation."

"Samee hopee belly muchee Blanchard not here."

The men whose voices had reached the hearing of Ned and Sam Ling continued to approach, and having arrived at the cell occupied by the bicyclist, they opened the door.

Then the inmates of the cell beheld a tall Cossack gendarme, a dark-faced Muscovite officer, and also a third individual whose features could not be distinctly discerned behind the other two men.

"Young man," said the officer, sternly, "I am the governor of the mines. Information of a reliable character has just reached me that instead of being an innocent American traveler you are really a cunning Russian Nihilist spy, and a subject of the czar who has taken advantage of the fact that he was educated in foreign lands to assume the character of a citizen of the United States. What have you to say in answer to this charge?"

"That it is entirely false. Who makes such an unfounded accusation?" replied Ned, boldly.

"I do!" said the man in the shadows behind the Russian officer and the Cossack gendarme.

"What, Blanchard!" exclaimed Ned, as he recognized the man who was pursuing him thus vindictively.

"Yes, Blanchard. Ha! you thought you had escaped me. But no, I trailed you across 'the great desert of Gobi' into Siberia and here," answered Blanchard, for he it really was who declared himself Ned's accuser.

"I would like to know why you are thus pursuing me," said Ned.

"You will find out in good time," answered Blanchard.

"Officer," said Ned, in an earnest and impressive manner, "that man Blanchard is my personal enemy, and I believe he has been bribed by a deadly foe to prevent my accomplishing my journey around the world. I positively deny his charge, and surely my papers prove that I am really an American citizen."

"And also a British citizen. Why should an honest traveler have two sets of papers? We found all your documents when you were searched. I was convinced then, almost, that you were not what you claimed to be."

Ned understood that the British consul's passport, or letter of identification, in which he was claimed as an English subject, after serving him well in China, was to cause him serious trouble in Siberia.

He tried to set himself right in the eyes of the governor of the mines, and he explained to him how it came about that he was in possession of the two sets of papers.

But the Muscovite had already been convinced by Blanchard that Ned was a Nihilist spy, and the young wheelman's explanation was received with sneers.

"It is just as I told you, general. He is a Nihilist spy. I have known him to have half a dozen forged sets of papers in his possession at once," said Blanchard.

"No doubt. He cannot deceive me now."

"It is not true," said Ned.

"Well, we will find out," answered the Muscovite.

"He was an Anarchist in America, where he was educated, though born in Russia. In the United States he committed a crime for which I was sent to capture him. He eluded me in Russia and went thence to China. I learned in St. Petersburg that he had joined the Nihilists, and set out on a mission for them, the purpose of which was to play the spy in Siberia, and where he found an opportunity to do so organize revolts among the convicts. I do not think he has ever become a naturalized American citizen, and so as he has entered the empire of the czar, whose subject he is, he has passed beyond my jurisdiction and into your power," continued Blanchard.

Ned listened with consternation and amazement to this specious tissue of falsehood, which yet had a certain semblance of truth.

CHAPTER XI.

NED'S FOE APPEARS AGAIN.

When Ned Worth heard the harsh voice in the passage outside of the cell of the ostrog at the village of the Siberian

He burst out in an indignant denial when Blanchard paused.

"Every word that scoundrel has uttered is a lie! Only motives of common humanity prompted me to assist the poor starving fugitives who had escaped from the mines. I am an American. My government will avenge me if I am detained or wronged. Beware, governor."

Thus said Ned.

"Me say that true all samee," affirmed Sam Ling earnestly.

"Bah! Your denials are natural, but entirely useless. You must confess. In such a course is your only hope. Come, now, make a clean breast of it all. Tell me who the Nihilists of St. Petersburg are who are concerned with you in this plot to get up revolts among the exiles. Speak! In the name of the czar I command you," said the governor.

"I tell you it's all a lie. I have nothing to confess!"

"We shall see. The torture of the knout has oftentimes loosened the tongues of the obstinate. Come, tell all, or to the whipping-post you go. I am determined to get at the truth of the conspiracy in which you are engaged."

Ned's face was pale, but it wore a resolute expression.

He said:

"Heaven witness my truth, I am what I claim to be and nothing more. I know nothing of any conspiracy, and therefore I can tell nothing."

"Gendarmes, bring the prisoner along. Zounds! he shall receive fifty lashes, and if they do not loosen his tongue he will get more," hissed the ferocious Muscovite.

The prospect before Ned was appalling. He had heard of the knout—the terrible whip of many lashes—used as an instrument of punishment and torture in Russia, and he imagined the frightful agony which its victim must undergo.

The Cossack gendarme seized the manacled wheelman rudely, and as he was unable to make any resistance, owing to his fetters, he was led out of the ostrog.

A file of Cossacks were drawn up at the door of the temporary prison. Between these guards Ned was escorted to the whipping-post. The post in question was about ten feet high, and near its top was a hook to which the victim's hands were wont to be lashed by the wrist when his arms were extended at full length above his head.

Ned felt an awful fear, a dread such as his brave spirit could not have experienced had he been called upon to face death with free hands and an opportunity to fight for life.

He tried to think calmly of some way to extricate himself out of this difficulty. As he was marched along toward the whipping-post his eyes suddenly rested upon a telegraph wire—a single wire. His reading had taught him that a telegraph wire, more than three thousand versts in length, ran from Eastern to Western Siberia. A thought flashed through Ned's mind as he beheld the telegraph wire which was the harbinger of a joyous hope.

"Does that wire run to Irkutsk?" he asked of the governor, who strode moodily in advance of him, in company with Blanchard.

"It does," gruffly replied the governor.

"And there is a United States consul there?" continued Ned.

"Yes."

"Then grant me one request: For heaven's sake do not refuse to let me send a dispatch to the United States consul and delay my punishment until an answer is returned," cried Ned.

"No, no, governor. If you pay any attention to this shallow ruse to obtain a respite you will regret it, I am confident," said Blanchard, betraying some consternation.

The governor regarded Blanchard searchingly.

The scoundrel did not squarely meet his glance.

It was a moment before the official spoke, but finally he turned to Ned, who was undergoing all the agony of suspense, and said:

"It shall be as you say. You shall send your telegram to the United States consul. Come."

"I protest, governor," cried Blanchard.

"Sir! I am in authority here!" thundered the governor.

"You will only waste time," grumbled Blanchard, but the governor turned his back on him and made no answer.

Ned was conducted to the telegraph station, and there he wrote the following dispatch, which he saw sent:

"Itska, Siberia.

"To the U. S. Consul of Siberia.—I, Edward Worth, the wheelman, who am making a trip around the world on a bicycle, have been denounced here as a Nihilist spy, and accused of being a Russian. I am in peril of my life through

the machinations of a foe whose interest it is to prevent my completing my journey. Save a fellow countryman by telegraphing a full and accurate description of myself if you can. Also please order a delay in my case through the governor of Siberia until my identity can be established.

"Edward Worth."

After Ned had this dispatch sent he waited in great anxiety for the answer. Every tick of the telegraph instrument made his heart leap, and a dozen times he asked the operator if an answer to his dispatch was coming.

Finally, however, the answer came.

CHAPTER XII.

SAVED BY A TELEGRAM.

"There is an answer to your telegram coming now," said the telegraph operator, an intelligent young Russian, who seemed to appreciate Ned's position, and possibly really sympathized with him secretly.

"What does it say? Has the United States Consul received my dispatch?" asked Ned, in breathless eagerness, his voice pulsating with anxiety.

"Yes; the consul is answering you. Control yourself and wait until the message is all in," replied the operator.

Then he began to write out the telegram as the mysterious key ticked out the combination of sounds which it was his office to comprehend and translate.

Ned was at a little railing which surrounded the telegrapher and shut him out from intrusion and the rest of the office.

Leaning over the railing, he looked over the operator's shoulder, and read the answer to his telegram as it was created word by word under the operator's pencil.

When he had all the dispatch the young wheelman uttered a loud shout of joy.

The dispatch was just what he could have desired. He felt that he was saved. The Cossack guards at the door started at Ned's shout and raised their carbines, as though they feared he had taken leave of his senses and meditated an attempt to escape.

Indeed, Ned was wild with joy. He danced about for a moment like one demented, and the governor and Blanchard, who had retired from the office, entering at that moment, halted in astonishment.

"You have read the good news already, I see, but here is your answer to the telegram," said the operator, kindly, as he placed the dispatch from the United States Consul in Ned's hands.

"Here is the evidence of my truth and that arch rascal's falsehood!" cried Ned.

With the dispatch in his hand he advanced to the governor triumphantly.

The official received the dispatch and read it aloud.

The telegram ran as follows:

"Irkutsk, Siberia.

"To Edward Worth, Itska, Siberia:

"I have the picture of Edward Worth, the American wheelman, who has undertaken to make a trip around the world. I shall telegraph a description of the picture of Worth to the governor of Itska to-day. If you are the original he will recognize you from my description, and your safety will be assured, because I have seen the governor of Siberia, and he has promised an order to delay any proceedings in your case until your identity is positively determined. Shall be sent by telegram to-day.

"Samuel L. Sherwood,

"U. S. Consul."

As the governor read Blanchard grew more and more uneasy until he heard the last words, then he seemed to realize that instead of getting Ned imprisoned for a long term, he was liable to be thrown into prison as an impostor. He had boldly personated the character of an American detective.

Blanchard began to edge toward the door of the telegraph office, but Ned was watching him, and he did not mean that he should escape.

"Don't let him go! See, the craven cur is trying to sneak away, now that he is sure he is about to be found out!" cried Ned, and as he spoke he pointed at the impostor.

"Stop that man!" ordered the governor.

Blanchard had reached the door, and the two Cossack gendarmes on duty there had drawn aside to permit him to pass.

As the Cossacks heard the general's order they both sprang forward, and their carbines came together with a crash as they crossed them before Blanchard.

The villain recoiled.

"I merely wished to step outside. It doesn't matter," he said, simulating nonchalance.

Just then the telegraphic instrument began to tick again, and the young wheelman and the governor both turned to the railing about the operator.

In two or three moments the operator handed the governor two dispatches.

The first read aloud thus:

"Irkutsk, Siberia.

"To the Governor of Itska,

"Sir.—You are ordered not to molest the man claiming to be Edward Worth, an American citizen. Hold him a prisoner, but treat him with respect until his identity is more positively established.

"Count Zebrara,
"Governor."

The second dispatch was from the United States Consul, and it was merely a brief description of Ned's personal appearance given from the picture which had been published in an illustrated American newspaper three months previously.

After reading this message the governor scrutinized the young wheelman closely for some moments.

Then, holding out his hand, he said frankly:

"You are Edward Worth, the American bicyclist, without a doubt, and I beg your pardon, and I will make all the amends in my power for the treatment which you have received here.

Ned accepted the governor's hand.

Then the latter glanced about as he said:

"Now to attend to Mr. Blanchard. He must answer for the imposition he has put upon me, and the deception which he has practiced."

"Where is he? Blanchard is no longer here!" cried Ned, in amazement.

It was indeed so.

Blanchard had disappeared, and yet the two guards, with carbines crossed, still stood at the door.

There was a screen at one side of the office near a window.

"Perhaps he has hidden here!" said the governor, and he ran to the screen and sprang behind it. Ned followed him, and as they turned the corner of the screen they made a discovery. The window beyond it was open. Then they understood Blanchard's disappearance. There was no mystery about it. The rascal had merely jumped through the window.

The governor was very much enraged. He avowed his intention of pursuing and capturing Blanchard at any cost. But first, at the request of the young wheelman, he ordered the release of Sam Ling, and wrote out a passport for him.

Ned went with a Cossack gendarme and liberated Sam. When the Mongolian comprehended the favorable turn affairs had taken for himself and his sister, he expressed his joy by pulling out a handful of colored papers, setting fire to them with a match and flinging them in the air.

"Them joss papers. Sam burn 'em all samee make joss do good turnee again!" explained Sam.

Ned laughed, and the grim Cossack soldier shook his head disapprovingly, and muttered in his beard:

"The fellow is a fool."

Ned meant to lose no time now in getting under way. Every day time was becoming more and more important. Six months had now elapsed, and he had not half completed his trip around the world. Any delay of much length would be fatal to winning the bonus he was working for.

The young wheelman's bicycle, and the sledge, and the team which had been taken from him were produced by order of the governor and delivered to Ned just as they were when they were taken from him.

The bicycle Ned found in need of repairs. He carried a number of extra bicycle fixtures, such as rods, bolts, washers, nuts, tires and spokes with him. He and Sam set to work to repair the wheel. A few hours' work placed it in excellent order again. Indeed, should it become necessary Ned could repair any injury the bicycle might sustain accidentally. With admirable forethought Ned had neglected nothing which might contribute to the success of his great undertaking.

The young traveler was about to leave the village of the prison mines, mounted upon his bicycle, and accompanied, of course, by Sam Ling, who drove the sledge containing the supplies as before, when the governor appeared before him, and said:

"I have just received orders to escort you across the nearest frontier of Russian territory. It appears that the governor of Siberia is not quite sure yet but that your nation may have some political object in sending you to traverse our country in the singular way in which you travel, and so he doesn't care to have you proceed further. India is the nearest foreign land, since we are in the south of Siberia. I shall have you escorted on Indian soil."

The next morning the escort arrived and they resumed their journey through the south of Siberia and reached the Bolor Mountain, and entered the Province of Penjab.

The escort turned back as soon as the territory of India was reached, and the wheelman and his servant were left to pursue their way alone.

The climate was now mild, although the rainy season was at hand, and it became necessary to abandon the sledge and team of Russian horses. To Sam Ling's unbounded delight, negotiations were successfully made with a native dealer, and by paying a very considerable cash bonus an elephant, well broken, was secured in exchange for the team of horses and sledge. The supplies previously transported in the sledge were now placed in a spacious howdah—a sort of palanquin secured upon the back of the elephant—and as Sam Ling had acquired previous experience in the management of elephants, the exchange of conveyance bade fair to prove exceedingly advantageous to the travelers.

Our friends traveled through India without occurrence worthy of note and entered the great desert. No more had they started to cross the desert than they were captured just at dusk by a band of Arabs, who immediately went into camp.

In the morning the Arabs struck camp very quickly. Indeed, in a few moments no trace of the encampment save a few bundles of tent material on camels' backs remained.

When the camp was broken Ned, to his great astonishment, beheld a fair young girl led out of one of the tents. She had golden hair and blue eyes, and he knew at a glance that she was a European, albeit she was dressed in Arab costume.

Her shapely arms were bare to the shoulder, but loaded with bracelets, and gleamed white in the morning light. Her feet and ankles were also naked, save for heavy gold bangles, and her sole garment was a robe of blue silk reaching to her knees, and girted with a splendid Persian shawl. Her hair was braided with long plaits and strung with gold coins into a very bewitching headdress, and taken all in all she was a very lovely creature.

Ned had no chance to speak to the girl on the march.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN ESCAPE.

When night came the Arabs encamped among the sand hills, which had been formed by the action of the wind upon the sand in the same way that snow is formed into drifts.

A tent was pitched for the fair European girl, and the wheelman observed that she was treated by all the band with the greatest consideration and respect.

Moreover, Ned heard her converse with the head sheik in the Arab language, which she spoke with an ease and fluency which could only have been acquired by one who had long dwelt with the nomads of the desert.

More and more interested became Ned in the beautiful white girl, and he longed to solve the mystery of her presence among that fierce band of Bedouin rovers.

But she did not come near him.

No chance to speak to her offered itself to Ned.

The wheelman was now in despair again. He believed he might as well make up his mind that it was decreed by a mandate of fate that he should not complete his bicycle tour of the world in one year.

But still in his stout heart the light of hope had not become entirely extinct, and as he and Sam Ling lay upon the sand under the stars that night they conversed in whispers until all became silent, and even the one solitary Arab on guard seemed to doze.

"If we could only liberate our hands, Sam, we would make one last desperate attempt to escape by stealing one of the

Arabs' camels each and making off with them," said Ned. Sam Ling assented, and he added:

"But our hands belly fast. No chance getee loose."

"No, I've tried in vain to loosen my bonds for the last hour."

A form was discerned stealing toward them from the direction of the sheik's tent.

Nearer it came, and then the young wheelman with feelings of surprise and hope discovered that the person who was approaching in such a stealthy manner was really the beautiful European girl about whom he had been puzzling his brain.

Soon she reached Ned and his servant, and making a signal of silence by placing her finger upon her lips, she produced a jeweled dagger which she carried in her girdle, and quickly cut the bonds which secured Ned and the Chinaman.

Then she pointed to the camels, and whispered:

"Steal away. Take camels and you may escape by proceeding straight in a northerly course. The guard sleeps. Go!"

"But of yourself? Are you a captive?" asked Ned.

"I am the adopted daughter of the sheik. I have been with the Arabs since I was an infant. I know nothing of my parents save that they must have been Europeans."

"Have you no wish to leave the Arabs?"

"No. I know no other life than such as they lead, and so I am quite content; and besides I love the chief's son. He is absent now, but he will soon return, and then we are to wed. He will succeed his father, and I shall be queen of the Bedouins."

"Then good-by, and a thousand thanks."

"Good-by."

Thus answered the maiden.

Then Ned and Sam Ling glided forward in the direction of the camels.

They reached them undiscovered. Ned led the one which was laden with his bicycle away and Sam secured another. They were soon out of sight of the Arab camp beyond the sand hills. Then Ling mounted one camel and led the other by a bridle, while Ned mounted his bicycle.

All night they journeyed, and when day dawned they saw they were nearing the confines of the desert.

By noon they were in a fertile country, and before night closed down again they reached a walled Arabian town.

They entered the town and were conducted before the petty sultan who governed the place. Ned told his story, and made the sultan a present of some gold coins. He was treated kindly, and in the morning permitted to go on.

The wheelman exchanged the stolen camels for a fleet horse, and while Sam Ling rode the mettlesome steed he once more mounted his bicycle and wheeled away with renewed hope.

Consulting his calendar, Ned found that he had a number of days to spare. So, even though he lost a few days more on the way, he might still possibly complete the great journey in three hundred and sixty-five days, and thus win the five thousand dollars.

Ned had neither seen nor heard anything of Blanchard since that rascal fled from the village of the prison mines in Siberia, and yet the premonition that the rascal would meet him again on his journey would come to his mind.

Ned and his companion crossed Arabia in safety, and proceeded by water up the Black Sea to Constantinople, the capital of Turkey. The voyage was made very swiftly and it gave Ned a good lift, and he found a vessel ready to sail for Naples, Italy, in the harbor of the Turkish capital.

The vessel in question was a fast English steamer. Ned secured a passage for himself and Sam Ling. The young wheelman had a good supply of money, which is all-powerful in every part of the world, for the Arabs had not robbed him of his letters of credit on Constantinople, which he had concealed in the lining of his clothing, though they had taken his ready money. He gave the captain of the English steamer an extra two hundred dollars to make the voyage as swiftly as was consistent with safety.

The voyage through the Turkish waters and up the Mediterranean was a delightful one, and as everything was in favor of the vessel the run was made in the shortest time on record.

Ned arrived in Naples in safety, and thence he and Sam proceeded to Rome. At a hotel which is very popular with foreign tourists the young wheelman took lodgings, intending to rest a day. As he was registering his name he chanced to glance over the pages of the register for some weeks past, and all at once copied the following entry:

"Horace Wheatcroft, Chicago, U. S. A."

"Mr. Wheatcroft, my old employer, and Ralph Bentley's partner! I wonder if the old gentleman is still in Rome?" thought Ned.

He inquired of the hotel clerk.

"Have you not heard of the misfortune which befell Mr. Wheatcroft and his party?" asked the clerk.

"No," replied Ned.

"Well, they were captured by the brigands," said the clerk.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WHEELMAN RESOLVES TO VENTURE AMONG THE BRIGANDS.

"What? Mr. Wheatcroft captured by brigands!" exclaimed Ned, when the hotel clerk vouchsafed that startling bit of information.

"Precisely," replied the clerk calmly.

"Has no attempt been made to rescue the unfortunate tourists?"

"Yes, but nothing has been accomplished."

Ned looked disgusted.

"But I assure you, sir, it is not the fault of the authorities," the clerk hastened to say.

"No?"

"Indeed it is not."

"Well, you will greatly oblige me if you will tell me all you know about the capture of Mr. Wheatcroft and his American companions."

"You are a friend of Mr. Wheatcroft?"

"Yes."

"Well, mi lord, Mr. Wheatcroft and three other gentlemen left Rome some three weeks since, accompanied by a guide, intending to visit some of the celebrated ruins on the Campagna beyond the city.

"No one had heard anything of the brigands this summer, although it was known that Luigi Mezzio, the celebrated brigand chief of the Apennines, had made his escape from prison in the spring, and had not been since recaptured.

"Entertaining no fears of brigands, the American party set out upon their sightseeing trip without an escort.

"There is where they made a mistake, as the result proved, for near the mountains they were ambushed and captured by a band of brigands led by the notorious and merciless Luigi Mezzio, in person.

"But here is the very guide who accompanied the unfortunate tourists. He can tell you more precisely than I how the capture was made, and all that transpired at the time.

"Here, Beppo Cerrazil!"

In answer to the call of the hotel clerk, a swarthy son of Italy, clad in the picturesque costume of a guide, who had at that moment entered the hotel office, came forward.

"Here is a friend of the American who was captured by the brigands. Mi lord desires you to tell him all about the affair," continued the clerk.

"Yes. Tell me how the capture was made, by good man," said Ned, as he placed a gold coin in the hand of the Italian guide, well knowing that was the best way to begin.

"Yes, mi lord. You must know I guided the party which was led by My Lord Wheatcroft. Very good. All went well until we were among the ruins in the hills at the foot of the Apennines ten miles beyond the city, and then suddenly a band of more than a score brigands sprang up from behind the rocks, and presented their carbines at myself and my company.

"We were completely surrounded and taken by surprise.

"Of course we were all captured, for how could it be otherwise with such odds against us?"

"The gentlemen and myself were bound and at once hurried away into the mountains.

"There a halt was made, and then the chief of the brigands, the great Luigi Mezzio, questioned the prisoners, and upon learning their names and nationality he stated that he should hold them captives until a certain amount of money was paid as a ransom for each of them.

"Mezzio wrote a letter to this effect, and then he gave the letter into my hands. The letter was addressed to the American Consul at Rome.

"I was then released and ordered to carry the letter to Rome.

"I made my way back to the city in safety, and at once went to the American Consul and gave him the letter from the brigand chief.

"You can learn particulars regarding the contents of the letter by calling upon the consul."

Such was the guide's narrative.

During his recital Ned had watched the fellow closely, and when he had concluded he gave him another gold coin, saying:

"I see you are a worthy fellow. I may wish to find you again, and if so, where shall I seek you?"

"I am here every day. You have only to leave word with the clerk, and I will come to you," replied the guide.

"Very good. Now I will go and call on the American Consul."

With this remark Ned hastened from the hotel.

Mr. Wheatcroft, whom Ned had served as a bookkeeper in Chicago before Ralph Bentley became a partner, had always treated the young wheelman with kindness and consideration, and on more than one occasion he had placed the young man under obligations to him.

Ned was sure that if Mr. Wheatcroft had been at home, or had any knowledge of the affair, he would not have sanctioned his discharge.

The noble young American resolved to attempt to rescue his former employer from the brigands.

Ned had some days to spare, which he could lose and yet make his great journey in the required time, as we have shown.

Ned had not as yet decided how he would set to work to save his friend. He thought he would leave the consideration of that point until he had interviewed the United States Consul.

The young wheelman found the representative of his government at his office, and he introduced himself and at once stated the subject of his visit.

"I fear that Mr. Wheatcroft and his friends can only secure their liberty by paying the ransom demanded by the rascal who has them in his power," said the consul.

"What is the amount of the ransom demanded for Mr. Wheatcroft?" asked Ned.

"Thirty thousand dollars."

"Will you let me take the letter written by the brigand chief?"

"Certainly," replied the consul, and he placed it in Ned's hands.

"I will return it to you in a day or two," said Ned, putting the letter written by Luigi Mezzio in his pocket.

"The authorities have been appealed to, but these Italians disgust me. They sent out some soldiers to look for the brigands, who made a scout through the mountains, and returned without even seeing one of the rascals. The truth is, all the peasants in the mountain region are in league with the bandits," said the consul.

"If such is the state of affairs I understand the secret of the success with which the brigands defy the authorities."

"Yes. You will find it as I say. I have received a communication from Mr. Wheatcroft which I found under my office door a few days since, in which he requests me to communicate with his partner, one Ralph Bentley, by a cablegram, and draw the funds through him to pay his ransom."

"So the old gentleman has decided to pay the ransom. Well, we shall see. Perhaps I can save him his thirty thousand dollars and also rescue him," said Ned.

CHAPTER XV.

WORKING TO SAVE MR. WHEATCROFT.

Thus replied Ned, and then he took his leave of the consul. During his voyage across the Caspian Sea and from Constantinople Ned had written up his letters for the National Wheelman, and that morning he had sent the narrative of his strange and exciting adventures by mail to the United States.

He was now at liberty to concentrate his mind upon his project for accomplishing the rescue of Mr. Wheatcroft.

"In the first place," said Ned in self-communion, "the guide, Beppo Corrazi, is a scoundrel, and I'll wager he's in league with Luigi Mezzio, the brigand chief, himself."

Ned was quite an expert physiognomist, and believed he had accurately read the character of the Italian guide from his face.

While the guide was telling his story of Mr. Wheatcroft's capture, Ned had formed this idea of him.

But the young wheelman had carefully concealed the true impression which he had formed of the guide, and led that personage to think he believed in his sincerity and good faith.

Upon leaving the office of the consul, Ned repaired to his hotel, where he found Sam Ling awaiting his return.

Ned told Sam all about Mr. Wheatcroft and his intention to attempt his rescue.

Then, seating himself at his desk, he wrote out a sketch of his travels and sent it by Sam to the leading Italian papers. Next morning it was published.

In this article Ned made himself out to be entirely out of funds, save enough to live on a few weeks, and explained that he was a poor American newspaper man who had been hired at a small salary to make the tour of the world.

"Now, then," said Ned, "the brigands will no doubt read that, and thus they will know in advance that it won't pay them to bother with me."

Meanwhile the young wheelman had been busily engaged in copying Mezzio, the brigand's, handwriting, using the letter which the brigand chief had sent to the American Consul as a copy.

Ned was an expert penman.

When he was satisfied that he could imitate the brigand's chirography so closely that even an expert in the detection of handwritings would not detect the forgery, he repaired to the consul's office again, and got one of the official clerks, who was an American, but who wrote perfect Italian, to write a note for him in that language, which ran thus:

"Annetti.—Upon receipt of this note from Beppo Corrazi, you will send a couple of trusty men with the prisoner Wheatcroft to the ruin near Neruga, where I am waiting to receive him, in order to exchange him for the ransom money. "Mezzio."

Ned had found out that in the absence of Luigi Mezzio, his band was commanded by his wife, who was called "Annetti."

Ned copied the above note in Mezzio's hand.

Then he set about making some preparations for a journey to the mountains. He purchased a pair of American revolvers for himself and the same for Sam Ling.

The bicycle was overhauled and found to be all right, but the camera and photographic outfit had been lost on the desert.

Ned went about the city looking for another.

He failed to find a regular bicycle camera, such as the patent American one he had lost, but he found a small camera provided with dry plates, and intended for instantaneous photography, at the shop of a dealer in photographic supplies.

Ned examined this camera, and it occurred to him that the manufacturer could easily supply it with the adjustments which were needed to render it available as a bicycle camera.

He offered such a suggestion.

The manufacturer of photographic appliances readily understood just what Ned wanted, and he assured him that he could transform the small camera into a bicycle camera in a short time.

A bargain was struck then and there, and Ned soon had the satisfaction of having the camera delivered to him, fitted with all the appliances it needed.

Then, when everything was ready for the start for the mountains which Ned contemplated, he visited the hotel office and chanced to meet Beppo Corrazi there.

Entering into conversation with the guide, he remarked casually:

"People will never be warned of danger by the experience of others, it seems. Now, only this day two American tourists, men of vast wealth as I happen to know, set out alone for the ruins near the hamlet by the lake. What folly!"

"Yes, mi lord," assented the guide.

Presently he left the hotel.

Sam Ling was just outside. The Chinaman had received his instructions from the young wheelman in advance, and he dogged the steps of the guide. The fellow went straight to a little wine shop in the suburb of the city, where he held a conversation with a savage-looking man dressed as a peasant. As soon as he heard what Beppo Corrazi said the fellow ran off toward the mountain.

Sam returned and told his master.

Then the two repaired to the wine shop.

Ned rode his bicycle and Sam was on horseback.

They reached the wine shop about three hours after the man who ran toward the mountain left it.

The shop was out of sight of any other building, in the midst of a grove. Ned and Sam entered and they saw no one but the old man who kept the place.

Now, of course, it was Ned's plan to draw Mezzio away from his band, and then send the forged note by Beppo Corrazi to his wife.

To this end he had invented the story of the two travelers

having gone to the ruins by the lake, reasoning that Beppo would send the news to Mezzio, and that the latter would hasten to the lake to capture the tourists.

Ned believed that the plan he had conceived had worked well so far, and that Beppo had sent a man to tell Mezzio of the presence of the mythical travelers at the lake.

The next move was to get Beppo to carry the forged note to the brigand's wife.

But how was this to be accomplished?

Ned was not working blindly. He had held a consultation with M. Leorenzi, the head of the Italian secret police.

That official had informed the young American that "old Gazi"—as he called the keeper of the isolated wine shop—was a paid spy of the police, though the keeper was one which none of his customers suspected.

M. Leorenzi further assured Ned that he did not doubt that for a valuable consideration the old rascal could be induced to play into his hands.

Ned's purpose in coming to the wine shop was to have a secret consultation with the old spy.

Finding no one but the old fellow in the shop, Ned hastened to present this note.

Gazi read it, and then burned it, but he did not say a word until he had secured the door and drawn a curtain over the one window of the room.

After taking these precautions, he said, in broken English:

"Well, you wanta Gazi doa something, eh?"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WINE SHOP.

"My friend Leorenzi informs me you will assist me in a certain way, provided I make it sufficient of an object."

"Well, whata you want done?"

"I want to send a letter to Lugi Mezzio's wife."

Old Gazi started.

"No, I cana do that."

"I do not want you to go to the mountains yourself."

"Oh, then me send a note."

"It must be sent by Beppo Corrazi."

"Beppo be here in a half a houra."

"That will do. Now here is the note which he must take to Annetti, the brigand's wife. Listen carefully now while I tell you what you must say to Beppo."

"Gazi heara."

"When the guide comes you must say: 'Lugi Mezzio has been here. He wanted some one to take a note to his wife for him, and I told him you would be here. He was pleased, and he left this note for you to take to his wife. This will be a good day's work for you.'"

"Gazi understand. But howa you know Mezzio not at him camp?"

"I shall know soon. You will tell me what the guide told the man who hurried away from here three hours ago."

"You are a shrewda, smarta man."

"Tell me, did not Carrazi send to bring Mezzio and his band to the ruins by the lake to capture a party of tourists?"

"Yes."

"Then we can count on his not being at his retreat in the mountains this afternoon."

"Yes, again."

"Will you serve me faithfully?"

"Since you come from M. Leorenzi I must."

"So he told me."

"Now, how mucha gold do youa pay?"

Ned named a liberal sum.

"Thata nota 'nough. I must go away if I am suspected, and I may be killed."

"Well, name your price."

The old fellow did so.

Ned agreed to his terms.

Then Gazi said:

"I change your plana a littlea."

"How so?"

"Instead of saying Mezzio come here in person, I saya he send boy with notea toa me, and with the note for Annetti."

"All right. You are very cunning."

"Gazi wishes to live. In that way, if Mezzio suspects he cannot prove, I saya same to him: I saya boy bring the note. I don'ta know him. The writing foola me. I act in gooda faith with him."

"A good idea. Now here is your money," said Ned.

Then he counted out the sum which had been agreed upon. The old rascal pocketed it.

Then Ned gave him the forged note addressed to the brigand's wife.

Ned and Sam Ling hastened from the wine shop.

They knew it would not do for Beppo Corrazi to see them there. In such an event the treacherous guide would be almost certain to suspect that something was wrong they well knew.

"Now, we will go on to the ruin to which I directed Annetti to send Mr. Wheatcroft in the note purporting to have been written by her husband, the brigand chief," said Ned.

Ned wheeled away lively and Sam rode by his side. In this way they were soon out of sight of the wine shop of old Gazi.

Ned now meant to reach the ruins to which he expected the brigands to bring Mr. Wheatcroft if all went well.

It was the young wheelman's plan to conceal himself there with Sam Ling and await the arrival of Mr. Wheatcroft and his captors.

If the brigands obeyed the forged note then it was Ned's purpose to attempt to rescue the captive American millionaire, assisted only by his faithful Chinese servant.

The young wheelman knew very well that his plan was a recklessly daring one, but for that very reason the more likely to succeed.

"Ah," said Ned to Sam Ling, as they rode along. "I fancy these macaroni-eaters would never suspect that you and I intend to attack the brigands. They would naturally think that we were the ones who might fear an attack."

"Me say all samee, an' me say be belly smartee else giteo cotched," remarked Sam.

"You see, if the brigands come to the ruins with my friend, we mean to snatch him away from them, mount him on your horse and away before they fairly make out what has happened."

The way Ned put it his project did not appear so exceedingly foolhardy and so little likely to succeed as it seemed upon the first consideration one would give it.

As the wheelman and his servant rode along toward the ruins, which were their destination now, they examined their weapons, and in order to still further convey the impression to any one who might be watching them that they were simply tourists and nothing more, Ned got his bicycle camera, which he had brought with him, in position and took several views of the surrounding country.

After taking the last view he slipped a new dry plate into the camera, and thus left the instrument in readiness for immediate use when next he wanted it.

Ned and his companion arrived at the ruins in safety and concealed themselves.

There was no one about, and they thought their movements were not observed.

Some time elapsed, and a moment later they saw a party of eight wild-looking men coming from the mountains, and among them Ned recognized Mr. Wheatcroft.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHILE NED PLANS A RESCUE ANOTHER PLANS TO CAPTURE.

"There they come, Sam, and sure enough, Mr. Wheatcroft is with them," Ned whispered to Sam, as he saw the eight brigands approaching with their prisoner.

"Yes, Samee see dem. Dem belly muchee badee mans. They makee big fightee all samee," replied the Chinaman.

"What! I hope you are not getting alarmed, Sam?"

"Not muchee."

"Well, brace up. Now, when the brigands come to yonder rock with Mr. Wheatcroft, we will make a rush at them and discharge a volley from our pistols. They will scatter for a moment. Then we must get Mr. Wheatcroft on your horse, which is hidden in the bushes just in the rear of our present position, you know."

"Me sabe."

"Then you will mount with Mr. Wheatcroft and ride away."

"All lightee. Horse belly stoutee."

"Yes, he will be able to easily carry double back to the city."

"So me say."

"And then while you ride away with Mr. Wheatcroft, if all goes well, I will mount my bicycle and follow."

"You think robber no catchee you?"

"No, for the path leading down from these ruins of the highway, though rather steep in some portions of the way, is hard, and will afford me good wheeling. I'll make the old wheel hum, and I'll show those Italian rascals something in the way of speed that will astonish them."

"Samee hopee so."

The ruins among which Ned and the Chinaman had concealed themselves were situated on the mountainside in the midst of a grove, and they were surrounded by small shrubbery.

Further up the side of the mountain became nude of vegetation, and massive rocks, like our own boulders in the western mountains, were strewn about in picturesque and chaotic confusion.

Hence it was that the concealed wheelman and his companion were enabled to discover the approach of the brigands over the barren mountainside, while they were yet entirely hidden from the sight of those alert and keen-eyed robbers.

As Ned looked upon the face of his old friend and former employer, as he was being led forward by his ruffianly captors, the young tourist noted that the old gentleman's face was pale and haggard, and that he looked ill and despondent. Ned's sympathies were more deeply awakened now than ever, and he understood how much the old gentleman at his advanced age must have suffered since he had been compelled to endure the trials and hardships of captivity among the brigands.

Such an experience would have severely tried the endurance of a young and hardy man, and it must have wrought frightfully upon the constitution of the aged millionaire.

But meanwhile the brigands continued to approach. When within a few yards of the hiding-place in which Ned and the Chinaman were concealed, and before they reached the rock of which Ned had spoken when planning how he would attack them, a ridge of massive rocks screened them from his view.

It was Ned's opinion that the brigands had now halted, for he did not see them again for some moments.

Presently, when Ned was growing impatient of the long delay which the brigands made behind the ridge of rocks, they appeared again.

But all of the party did not come into sight again then. Ned had counted eight brigands when they disappeared behind the rocks, and now he could make out only six. These men continued to advance with Mr. Wheatcroft among them.

"What had become of the two brigands who had not reappeared from behind the rocks?"

Ned mentally propounded this question, but he could think of no satisfactory explanation, and the occurrence troubled him not a little, knowing as he did, that the slightest hitch in his plans would cause the entire project to fail.

That the reader may clearly understand the surprising and thrilling occurrences which were about to ensue, and that the unities of the narrative may be preserved, it now becomes necessary that we should leave Ned and his companion in their present situation of peril and suspense, while we narrate certain incidents which occurred in Rome that day.

At an early hour a traveler, dusty and bearing upon his person every external evidence that seemed to tell he had recently made a long and weary journey, arrived at the hotel in Rome, where Ned and his devoted Chinese servant were stopping.

The strange traveler was an American, dark and bearded, and as we do not desire to attempt any concealment regarding him, we will state at once that he was Ned Worth's mortal enemy, the villainous Blanchard.

Yes, Blanchard had escaped the perils of Siberia and reached Persia, whence by water and by land, using freely the gold which Ralph Bentley had given him, he was enabled to trace the young wheelman who had thus far escaped him in every land.

We need not dwell upon the incidents of Blanchard's escape from the village at the Siberian prison mines or his subsequent adventures on the way. Suffice it to say that he bribed the Cossacks sent in pursuit of him to permit him to escape.

Blanchard had become a veritable human bloodhound, and he was still determined to accomplish the doom of Ned Worth.

Upon his arrival at Ned's hotel in Rome, the villain examined the register and found Ned's name.

"I must look up Corrazi. The rascal is just the man I need now," said Blanchard, when he had made his disguise.

With this monologue, which betrayed some previous knowl-

edge of the treacherous guide, Blanchard stationed himself at the door of the hotel.

The reader will remember that when we introduced Blanchard and as we do not desire to attempt any concealment regarding Ned Worth was entered into between him and Bentley, it was stated that the fellow had seen "better days."

The truth was, Blanchard had inherited a fortune and squandered it. He had visited Europe and Italy in the halcyon days when he had money, and in Rome he had made the acquaintance of Beppo Corrazi, through whom he had betrayed a wealthy fellow-tourist into the power of Luigi Mezzio's band of brigands, receiving for his perfidious work a large share of the enormous ransom which was extorted from the captive, who was finally liberated, and who never suspected the treachery of Blanchard, who professed to be his very best friend.

Blanchard meant now to plan to have Ned taken captive by the brigands and carried away into the mountains, where he could be secretly slain, and his fate forever remain a mystery.

Before Ned met Corrazi and told him the story which he had concocted to draw Mezzio away from his band, Corrazi passed the watchful Blanchard, who at once recognized him and accosted him thus:

"Ah, Beppo! how are you?"

The guide did not recognize Blanchard, but he replied:

"Mi lord knows my name. If he is in search of a guide——"

"What! Have you forgotten my voice?" said Blanchard, and he added in a hissing whisper:

"I am Blanchard."

"What! The black American?"

"Yes, and I have work for you."

CHAPTER XVIII.

A COUNTER PLOT BY CORRAZI.

The brigands and their confederates had bestowed upon Blanchard the sobriquet, "the black American," on account of his black beard and hair, and generally swarthy appearance.

"Come, Beppo," said Blanchard, after shaking hands with the treacherous guide, "I want to have a little talk with you. We will adjourn to the 'Cafe Italy' yonder and open a bottle of wine, over which I will unfold a little project which I have in mind, and which, if successful, will enable you to place a snug sum in gold in your pocket."

"I am always at your service," replied the guide.

He led the way across the street, and Blanchard followed him. They entered the Cafe Italy, one of these comfortable Italian hostleries which combine all the attractions of a drinking saloon and a restaurant where any delicacy of the season may be ordered for a meal.

A series of compartments curtained off from the main portion of the saloon were intended for the convenience of such patrons as desired to screen themselves from observation, and of one of these Blanchard and Corrazi took possession.

A bottle of wine was called for, and over this the American scoundrel unfolded his plot to the Italian.

When Corrazi left the Cafe Italy he returned to the hotel. Then it was Ned met him and told him the romance about the two Americans who had gone to the ruins by the lake.

We have seen how the guide swallowed the bait.

But Corrazi was a shrewd fellow.

Some time after he sent a messenger from Old Gazi's wine shop to tell Mezzio, the brigand, about the two travelers of whom Ned had informed him, he returned to the wine shop as Gazi said he would.

Then the old wine seller gave him the forged note which Ned had written, and which purported to be from Mezzio.

The old shopman told Corrazi that the note had come from Mezzio by a boy.

"Who was the boy?" asked Corrazi.

"I do not know. I never saw him before," said Gazi.

Corrazi possessed large, brilliant, black eyes and they were very penetrating. He looked at Gazi very searchingly. The old fellow was oppressed by the nervousness of conscious guilt. He was sorting and arranging his wine glasses, and his hands trembled so that they clinked against each other strangely.

This Corrazi noticed, but he said nothing.

The guide quickly read the forged letter, and then he said:

"I am off for the mountains."

"You will carry the note to Annetti?" asked old Gazi.

"Yes," replied Corrazi, laconically.

Then he hastened from the wine shop.

Old Gazi watched him from the window, and saw that he went in the direction of the mountains. Then he came to a halt and once more took out the note addressed to Annetti, which he had placed in his pocket. He read it again, and scrutinized it in a way that told he entertained some suspicion regarding it.

"I am familiar with Mezzio's handwriting," muttered the guide in his native language. "This looks like his handwriting. But for the paper on which it is written I should never have thought of questioning it. But the paper? By all the saints, Mezzio never used such paper. It is of fine texture, and such as they use at the hotel. Ha! Is it possible this is a 'plant'? I did not like old Gazi's manner. He seemed perturbed. Is the old fellow playing a part? Singular, too, he did not know who brought the note to his shop. He said the messenger was a boy. I wish I knew who had been there to-day."

While the guide was indulging in this monologue he saw a decrepit old woman, who carried a staff which supported her tottering limbs, approaching.

"Ah, here comes Mother Lugi, the beggar, who usually sits near the wine shop. Perhaps she may have seen, and taken particular notice of any stranger if such has been at the wine shop to-day, since it is her business to solicit alms. I'll question her." Thus saying, Corrazi accosted the old woman who had now reached him.

"Ah, mother, what luck to-day. Have you gathered many coins?" he said.

"No, and worse luck I missed an excellent chance by falling asleep behind my bench near the wine shop of our friend, old Gazi," answered the woman.

"You missed a chance to beg! Tell me how that was."

"Well, you see, I awoke after a nap and saw two foreigners, one riding a wheel such as tourists bring here sometimes, and the other—a Chinaman—mounted on a horse, riding away from the shop at which they must have stopped while I slept. It was too late to importune them."

"Which way did the two strangers go?" asked Corrazi, excitedly.

"In the direction of the ruins by the mountainside."

"Ha! I see it all! The young American whom the black American Blanchard wants out of the way forged this note. His story about the two travelers was a lie! He means to lay in wait at the ruins and try to rescue Wheatcroft when Annetti brings him there. Well, I go on to the mountains and arrange a trap for my young schemer. Wheatcroft shall be brought to the ruins, but he shall not be rescued. On the contrary, this young American who rides the bicycle shall be taken captive. Ha! now I see my way clear to earn Blanchard's money, and the young fellow shall be caught in his own trap."

Thus said Corrazi, mentally.

Then he continued on his way, and he did not pause until he reached a hidden defile in the mountains where the brigands of Lugi Mezzio's band were encamped.

Lugi Mezzio was not with his band. Acting upon the information which Corrazi had sent him, he had gone to capture the mythical travelers whom Ned had invented.

Corrazi quickly told Annetti, the brigand's wife, all about what he knew and suspected, and they planned to entrap Ned at the ruins. Corrazi disguised himself and at once set out for that place, accompanied by seven of Mezzio's men, and taking Wheatcroft with him, so that Ned would not take the alarm when he saw the brigands coming.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE FIGHT WITH BRIGANDS AT THE RUINS.

When the brigands, whom Ned had discovered approaching with their captive, were for a few moments hidden behind the ridge of rocks which lay in their way, Corrazi said:

"You, Antonio and Victor, glide forward, and, making a detour, approach the ruins from the rear, seek to discover the two men whom we believe to be concealed there, and if you find them try to steal upon them and overpower them by a surprise. At all events, be alert to intercept them and prevent their escape down the mountains."

"We will do so," replied one of the brigands, and with the comrade whom Corrazi had named he started stealthily forward.

Little did Ned think that the two brigands for whose disappearance he was unable to account were creeping upon him

from a direction whence he least expected the appearance of an enemy.

But meanwhile Mr. Wheatcroft had gained a knowledge of the true state of affairs, and his heart was filled with gratitude. He desired, above all things, to convey a warning to the noble young man who was daringly risking his life in his behalf.

Moreover, the old gentleman had resolved to do something himself toward accomplishing his escape, now that he was out of the mountains. The captive realized again, and he was aware that if there should be any hitch in the negotiations which Mezzio was carrying forward to bring about the payment of his ransom he would be doomed to a cruel death.

Mr. Wheatcroft was a man of resolution, and despite his years he did not lack courage.

When the brigands emerged from behind the rocks, which had for a time concealed their approach, and continued their advance toward the ruins, all their attention was centered upon the place where they supposed the two men whom they meant to capture were hidden.

Not for a moment did they entertain a thought that the feeble old gentleman who was already in their power would make an attempt to escape.

But that personage was watching for his opportunity.

The brigands who were approaching from the mountainside were very near Ned and the Chinaman, and the two robbers who had gained the rear of the young wheelman and his companion, stealthily crawling upon them, when all at once Mr. Wheatcroft made a dash forward.

His movement was so suddenly accomplished that the brigands were taken completely by surprise, and he was several yards ahead of them in an instant.

As he bounded forward with a speed of which no one would have supposed him capable, but which was inspired by the terrible circumstances which prompted the desperate attempt, Mr. Wheatcroft shouted loudly:

"You are betrayed, Ned! Run for your life!"

At the same thrilling moment Sam Ling discovered the two brigands in the rear.

"Hi, yi! We're surrounded, all sameel!" he cried.

Then Ned saw the scoundrels behind him, but he felt like making a great fight.

His blood was up, and he had true American grit.

"Give the fellows behind a shot, Sam!" he cried, and then leveling a revolver in each hand he took aim over the rocks which sheltered him at the brigands who were rushing in pursuit of Mr. Wheatcroft.

Quick as thought Ned sent a volley of shots from his self-cocking revolvers among the brigands. The latter hesitated about shooting down Mr. Wheatcroft, for they knew their chief counted upon getting a large ransom for the old fellow.

Two of the brigands fell beneath Ned's volley, and another leap carried Mr. Wheatcroft to Ned's side under the sheltering rocks which served as a breastwork between the young man and his enemies.

"Quick! quick! Mount yonder horse and away!" cried Ned, pointing to Sam Ling's horse, which stood at one side but a few feet distant.

Ned's words were interrupted by the report of Sam Ling's revolver, which rang out sharp and clear twice in rapid succession.

Mingled with the report of the Chinaman's weapon came the yells of the two brigands in the rear at whom Sam had fired, and one of them limped into the bushes wounded in the leg, while the other took to his heels and ran away at the top of his speed. The Italian brigands are not composed of the material of which heroes are made.

As the brigands in the rear were disposed of, Mr. Wheatcroft, who had hastened to obey Ned's command, gained the horse, mounted it, and was ready to ride away, but he seemed to hesitate about doing so while Ned was in peril.

The brigands were now rushing at Ned, and as he discharged his weapons at them again he shouted to Mr. Wheatcroft:

"Away! away! Ride for your life, and do not stop until you are safe in the city. I will cover your retreat. Mount with Mr. Wheatcroft, Sam, I'll follow on the wheel. Quick! quick! or all is lost!"

Sam sprang up behind the old gentleman, and the succeeding moment the doubly laden horse thundered down the mountainside.

Ned uttered a ringing shout, and wheeling, he darted to-

ward a rock a few paces in the rear behind which he had left his bicycle.

The infuriated brigands followed the young wheelman, shouting like a band of savages, and a volley of bullets from their carbines, which, in the excitement of the moment, were very badly aimed, rattled around him.

Ned reached the rock behind which he had left his bicycle.

Then a cry of rage and astonishment burst from his lips as he saw that his bicycle was gone.

Glancing to the right where a side path wound around the mountainside from that point, he saw the brigand who had escaped Sam Ling's bullet making off with his beloved wheel.

The young wheelman darted in pursuit of the brigand with his wheel, because he knew that he must regain possession of it if he hoped to escape. He was aware that among the Italian brigands are found some of the swiftest runners in the world. Mounted upon his bicycle the young wheelman felt that he might escape, while on foot it would be impossible to do so.

The young traveler began to load one of his revolvers as he ran.

In a moment he had slipped a couple of cartridges into the cylinder of his revolver.

Then he took aim at the brigand who was racing away with his wheel, and shouted:

"Drop the wheel, or I fire!"

The brigand uttered a taunting shout, and, instead of heeding Ned's command, he increased his pace.

"You will have it, but I do not wish to kill you," muttered Ned.

He then halted for an instant, in order to make certain of his aim. His pistol did not deviate a hair's breadth from its line. There was a sharp report and the brigand staggered, dropped the bicycle and hopped about on one leg, uttering yells of pain and rage.

Ned had shot him in the leg.

With his smoking pistol in his hand the young wheelman rushed forward and reached his wheel. Wounded as he was, the brigand had gained the shelter of some rocks.

Ned did not pause an instant. Placing the bicycle in position he grasped the handle, threw one foot upon the pedal, gave the wheel a forward impetus and made a "mount" with an ease and grace only acquired by long practice.

But now the brigands had almost reached Ned. Yet he felt sure of escape, and he uttered a defiant shout as he sent the magic wheel forward and gathered increased speed at every revolution.

The path wound downward until it reached the fine level road leading to Rome. Ned accelerated his speed until he seemed to fairly fly along the path.

"Well, I've carried my plan through all right, but it was hot work and plenty of it. Now if Mr. Wheatcroft and Sam have only reached the city all right I've nothing more to wish for, and to-morrow I must be off. No more delay. I mean to win Mr. Shrewd's five thousand dollars now or break something, as the Pike's Peak emigrant said," muttered Ned.

He now proceeded quite leisurely in order to regain his wind, which had been pretty well exhausted in his thrilling race, and he no longer had any fear of pursuit.

Ned passed old Gazi's wine shop, and he was about to halt there when he caught a glimpse of the old fellow whom he had bribed, as the latter stood in the door and saw him make a signal which he understood to be a warning not to halt. Without stopping, Ned continued on in the direction of the city. Glancing back after a moment he saw a man at the door of the wine shop who looked like an English tourist.

This was Blanchard.

Ned reached the city in safety, and as he was entering it he encountered Sam Ling and a file of soldiers.

CHAPTER XX.

THE BICYCLE CAMERA SERVES A GOOD PURPOSE.

At the sight of Ned, Sam Ling uttered a joyful shout, and, running forward, he seized both his master's hands and began to work his arms like a pair of pump handles.

When this hand-shaking business became tiresome Ned released himself, and then Sam capered about giving vent to his unbounded delight in choice Chinese, which was like

sweetness wasted on the desert air to his hearers, to whom his "palaver" was all Choctaw.

But Ned's faithful servant came down to English when his excitement had somewhat subsided, and he said:

"Samee gettee soldiers to go look for you, sabe?"

"Yes. Many thanks. I've no use for them now. And tell me, where is Mr. Wheatcroft?"

"At hotelee, all lightee."

"I am delighted to hear it."

Ned informed the officer in command of the soldiers that he hoped they would capture the brigands, and they went on, while the wheelman and Sam hastened to the hotel.

There they found Mr. Wheatcroft. The old gentleman had eaten a good meal and consumed a bottle of good old wine, and he looked a hundred per cent. better than when Ned saw him in the hands of his late captors.

Then a conversation of some length ensued between Mr. Wheatcroft and Ned.

The wheelman had to tell what occurred in the mountains after Mr. Wheatcroft and Sam fled on the horse, and after that the old gentleman asked:

"How is it you are way off here in Europe? How came you to leave my employ?"

Thus questioned, Ned told the story of his discharge by Ralph Bentley, and he explained that jealousy had prompted Bentley to seek to injure him in every way.

Ned, moreover, told of Blanchard, and explained how that villain had sought to prevent his accomplishing his great journey.

He stated, too, that he suspected Ralph Bentley had sent Blanchard to follow him.

Mr. Wheatcroft expressed his indignation at Ralph Bentley's conduct, and he said:

"As soon as I return home there will be a dissolution of the partnership now existing between myself and Bentley. I fear he is mismanaging affairs, for private correspondents have so hinted. Be that as it may, I want nothing to do with such an unprincipled villain as Bentley's conduct regarding yourself has proven him to be."

"When do you return home?" asked Ned.

Mr. Wheatcroft mentioned the time when he proposed to set sail for the United States, adding:

"I desire to make the tour of Switzerland."

"Then you and I will reach home at the same time," said Ned.

"Cannot we arrange to sail on the same steamer?" asked Mr. Wheatcroft.

"Perhaps I shall sail from Havre, France."

"I will meet you there on the date mentioned."

"Good. Then we will make the return ocean voyage in company."

Thus it was arranged.

Meanwhile the news of Mr. Wheatcroft's escape, and the daring part the young American wheelman had played in it, had spread throughout the city, and Ned found himself the hero of Rome.

Being a hero was all very pleasant at first, but Ned soon found it something of a bore. Every one wanted to be introduced to him. He was pointed at, and stared at wherever he went, and he had to tell the story of his adventure with the brigands a dozen times or more every hour.

But Ned got rid of all this by hastening away. He said good-by to Mr. Wheatcroft at night, and in the morning at an early hour he and Sam Ling quietly took their departure from the city.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONCLUSION.

Nothing worthy of special mention occurred until they reached Versailles. There Ned met with a thrilling adventure.

In the evening he strolled out alone to view the historic old place.

Led on by curiosity and interest, those two irresistible decoys, the young wheelman wandered into the suburbs and along the banks of the old canal.

All at once he became aware that he was followed that some one was stealing after him. The lamps which illuminated the street were far apart, and their flickering light

failed to penetrate the gathering fog, which hung over the city like a sombre pall. Ned glanced behind him, and he espied indistinctly three shadowy forms which looked grotesque and unreal through the mist and uncertain light.

The young wheelman was armed, and he was drawing his revolver when a man bounded up the side of the canal embankment close beside him. Ned turned like a flash, and as he did so there was a vivid flash through the gloom accompanied by a report. The man from the canal had discharged his pistol at Ned point-blank, and at short range. The young tourist uttered a cry, turned half around, staggered uncertainly, and then fell over the embankment into the canal.

A flash of light from the great iron flue of a foundry across the way shot a lurid shaft of flame athwart the canopy of gloom, and for an instant illuminated the face of the man who had shot Ned.

The pale, haggard features of Blanchard were thus revealed for a moment by this accidental light, as though it was the will of the Almighty to disclose to his fellow men the face of him who had at that time set at naught, in his heart at least, the command given unto all mankind: "Thou shalt not kill."

And Blanchard fled. Fled as with terror, and as though he felt upon his livid brow the brand of Cain indelibly imprinted there.

But the reader must not be kept in suspense regarding Ned. The young wheelman was not slain. Blanchard's bullet merely grazed his skull, and he fell unconscious. The cold water of the canal revived him, and he gained the bank a few moments later, and clambered up the steep ascent after several ineffectual struggles. Then he made his way in safety back to his hotel.

Meanwhile Blanchard entertained no doubt of his death, and he traveled all night on his way to Paris. Reaching that city, he found he had time to catch a train for Havre within the hour. He posted forward, after first assuming a disguise, and reached Havre at length in safety. Blanchard's one thought now was to escape from France, and he was fortunate enough to secure passage on a fast French schooner.

Blanchard reached New York in safety after a pleasant voyage, which was a remarkably fast one. Then he took the first train west, and reached Chicago without accident.

Meanwhile Ned arrived at Havre, and there he met Mr. Wheatcroft at the time they had previously agreed upon. The wheelman and the American millionaire, accompanied by Sam Ling, whose visions of a fortune to be acquired beyond the sea through the medium of soapsuds and starch rendered him quite happy, sailed from Havre on the same steamer.

* * * * *

It was the evening of the 9th of May, 18—, and the wheelmen's club of Chicago, of which Ned Worth was a member, was assembled in their spacious hall. The occasion was a banquet given to Mr. Jason Shrewd, the publisher of *The National Wheelman*, who had engaged Ned Worth to make the tour of the world on a bicycle. There was a large number of invited guests present, and the only circumstance which detracted from the enjoyment of all present was the fear and doubt entertained by all regarding the fate of Ned Worth. Not a word had been heard from Ned since he crossed the Italian frontier. The letters he had written from Lyons had not been received, and it was feared Ned had perished in the Alps, for news had been received of the finding of a dead man at the foot of an abyss near Mont Blanc who was a bicycle tourist, and whose description accorded in some respects with Ned's appearance. Ned's mother and sister, and his betrothed, beautiful Lucy Dean, were well-nigh distracted with grief and suspense, and yet they did not permit themselves to despair utterly while yet there was a single doubt. As the drowning man desperately clutches at the frailest straw, so those loving women in this dark hour clung to sorrow's pole star, hope. Lucy was true and faithful, and although Ralph Bentley had striven, by means of subterfuge and falsehood, to supplant Ned in her regard he had failed utterly. But Bentley was triumphant in the thought that Ned Worth would never return, and he consoled himself with the delusive hope that time would obliterate Ned's memory, and that Lucy Dean would yet be his! Moreover, the scoundrel exulted in the prospect of winning all his wagers, for he had made many bets of large sums that Ned would never return, and also that he would not complete the tour of the world in three hundred and sixty-five days.

To-morrow, at ten o'clock a. m., Ned's time would be up, and if he did not present himself in Chicago before the clock struck ten he would lose the five thousand dollars he had tried so hard to win.

Ralph Bentley was present at the wheelmen's banquet, and so, of course, was Mr. Shrewd, in whose honor the entertainment was given.

Every one was talking about Ned. A few hopeful spirits still advocated the possibility of his safe return. But Ralph Bentley was loud in his offers to wager either that Ned would not return at all, or not in the specified time.

"Yes," said Bentley, "I offer two to one, and any sum any one may name, Worth don't return."

"Do you really mean that, Bentley?" asked a wealthy young board of trade speculator named Strong.

"I certainly do."

"I don't know. Somehow I've got faith in Ned Worth, and I dreamt last night that he turned up all right. I'll tell you what I'll do, old man, I'll go you ten thousand to your twenty thousand that Ned Worth is here before ten o'clock to-morrow. What do you say?" said Strong.

"Done," said Bentley, and the bet was duly recorded and witnessed.

Just then a porter entered the lobby, and said:

"Two ladies desire to see Mr. Shrewd," and thus speaking, the man handed the publisher two cards, which he read, and said:

"Ah, Mrs. Worth and Miss Dean. Our heroic young wheelman's mother and a friend. Admit the ladies. I am at their service."

There was a number of ladies present who were the friends of the clubmen, and so Ned's mother and sweetheart did not feel embarrassed when they were ushered into the room. A moment later supper was announced. The company took their places at the table, and Mr. Shrewd escorted Mrs. Worth, while Lucy accepted the arm of Mr. Strong, whom she knew to be Ned's friend.

Many toasts were on the list for the evening, and the first was proposed to Mr. Shrewd. He said:

"To Ned Worth, the champion of the wheel in every land. Poor Ned, his chair is empty at this festive board, but let us hope he may some time return to fill it. Who can tell what our daring friend's fate may be or where he is now?"

Mr. Shrewd paused for a moment, and as he did so a ringing voice cried:

"Ned Worth is here!"

Every eye was turned toward the door of the banquet hall, and there all beheld Ned Worth in person, cap in hand, bowing and smiling, and looking as handsome as an Adonis, though his face was bronzed by the sun and wind of many lands.

And then a cheer went up that almost lifted the roof.

"Ned, Ned!" cried Mrs. Worth and Lucy, and the succeeding moment those two loving women were clasped in the returned wanderer's fond embrace.

"Duped—ruined! I'll have Blanchard's life!" hissed Ralph Bentley, and unnoticed he fled from the room.

* * * * *

We have but little more to add.

Ned had planned this surprise. He had purposely let his fate remain a mystery from the time when Blanchard thought he killed him, and he had sent a cable message to Strong, telling him to wager ten thousand dollars on his return with Bentley.

The bicycle tourist was the hero of the hour, and that night was one of festivity and joy.

The following day Ned received his five thousand dollars from Mr. Shrewd. As for Bentley, his bets ruined him, and he fled in disgrace without paying his bet with Strong.

Ned married Lucy, and prosperity and happiness came to him and his.

Neither Bentley nor Blanchard ever crossed the path of the young hero who had made the great journey around the world on a bicycle.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG CAPTAIN ROCK; OR, THE FIRST OF THE WHITEBOYS," by Allyn Draper.

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE

CURRENT NEWS

One of the largest sturgeons that has ever been caught in the Delaware River as far upstream as this was taken, netted, then roped by George Saxton and Anthony Shores, of Bristol, Pa., who were fishing for shad. The very lively seven-foot fish gave them a hard tussle before it was landed, and then it was discovered to weigh 250 pounds.

A human skeleton disappeared from the barn of County Physician W. C. Loomis, of Wichita, Kan. It had just been purchased by the county official and was not "set up"; the pieces were in a sack. It was valued at \$20. Police are examining junk yards in the belief that the skeleton has been sold as old bones.

A school for deep-sea diving has been started at the Torpedo Station, Newport, R. I. It is in charge of Comdr. John K. Robinson, U. S. N., with Gunners C. L. Tibbals and J. C. Heck. Narragansett Bay will be used in the training, with launches from the station, and it has a depth of 150 feet. When additional depths are required such can be obtained just outside the entrance to the bay.

Declaring that his good looks are ruined by having his mustache burned off in an explosion, Dr. W. S. Galloway, of Henderson, Ky., is seeking to collect \$600 from an insurance company in which he was carrying an accident policy. The doctor feels his loss quite keenly, for he spent twenty years in growing the hirsute adornment, which he succeeded in coaxing out to a length of nine inches from tip to tip.

Wonderful advance is being registered in the shipbuilding industry in the United States. Never have so many keels been laid or such a wide diversity in construction been reported. Fifteen years ago the average tonnage in the yards of the United States was 200,000 yearly. There are now more than 1,000,000 tons under contract in American shipyards, the value of the work representing considerably more than \$100,000,000.

With two toes amputated that he might pass an entrance examination to West Point, Harold De Forest, of Wetmore, has been discharged from a hospital in Atchison, Kan. The operation was performed two weeks ago, and De Forest, who also attended Midland College, left for his home. He had what is known as "hammer toes," that is, two toes were drawn back and wouldn't straighten out. Those two toes wouldn't pass the examination, and he was promised admittance in case the toes were amputated.

Scrambling out of the pond adjoining the local Milwaukee switching yards, Otto Sincox, a Mitchell, S. Dak., youngster, snatched his little sister off a railroad track in time to save her life. While her brother was in swimming the little girl was amusing herself throwing pebbles at him from the track. The boy happened to look up and saw a long freight train coming up the track on which his sister was playing. She did not heed him when he called in alarm, and he just managed to reach her and jump into the water with her when the engine passed the spot.

As a result of the shortage of dye-stuffs caused by the war, the market for a Porto Rican product known as annatto—the seed of a tree yielding a yellow coloring matter—has suddenly increased greatly. Before the war there was little demand for it, but in view of the fact that it may be used as a substitute for the regular dye-stuffs now lacking, the exports of annatto from Porto Rico have risen by leaps and bounds in quantity and value. Whereas, in ordinary times annatto sold as low as \$4 and \$5 per 100 pounds, it now commands as much as \$15 for the same quantity. The annatto tree grows wild and the collection of the seeds is a source of income to numerous country folk. The seeds are used for coloring silk, cotton, wool, confectionery, butter, cheese, sauces, varnishes, lacquer, etc. The local Porto Rican name for the product is "achiote." If the present "boom" continues it may bring about the planting of the trees on a large scale.

Patent papers were recently granted to Isadore Kitsee, a Philadelphia inventor, covering a process for the destruction of insect and germ life harmful to plants and trees, the electrical method taking the place, to a great extent, of the usual sprays and other applications. The process consists of making an application of a solution such as saline water where the ground is to be treated, and then causing a current of electricity to be passed through the soil, whereupon the gas generated will rid the soil of germs, larvae and insects without the least injury to the vegetation. Where a larger area is to be treated, it has been found desirable to dig shallow trenches at opposite sides of the area to be treated, and the electric terminals are placed in these. An application of a somewhat more powerful current will rid the entire area of pests. When the plant itself is to be treated, the solution carrying the element is made with electrolyte in an apparatus, and the plant sprayed with a solution after decomposition has taken place through the action of the electric current.

MAKING IT PAY

—OR—

The Boy Who Bought a Newspaper

BY WILLIAM WADE

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER II (continued).

"Very well. Hold the forms open till I go down to the telegraph office and see if there is anything. They have no one to send at this time, very likely."

Dick put on a rubber coat, drew his hat over his eyes and set out for the telegraph office.

It was raining a little, but the thunder and lightning still seemed distant.

He found some dispatches, the last he would get that night, awaiting him and, thrusting them into an inside pocket, he started to return to the office.

It was a walk of not more than five minutes, but it had begun to rain with considerable violence just as he left the telegraph office, and he walked along briskly.

The thunder now began to sound much louder than before, while the lightning was quite vivid.

As the boy reached the First National Bank of Norwood, with its great square windows reaching quite to the floor and showing the interior of the banking office, there came a flash of lightning so intense that he was startled.

Accompanying the flash was a peal of thunder which made his ears ring. It was deafening.

A low light was usually kept burning in the bank all night and the office doors were thrown open, so that a view of the entire place could be seen and, as the town police went by at intervals of an hour, it was considered impossible for any one to rob it.

The flash lighted up the whole interior and, as plainly as if it had been in daylight, Dick saw two men kneeling and a third standing by the open door of the great safe in the rear.

The man standing was young and rather handsome, with a thick and somewhat drooping blond mustache, large eyes, high forehead, straight nose and a dark scar just below the left temple.

One of the kneeling men had his face turned toward the safe, and the other wore a black mask, but Dick saw the face of the man standing so distinctly that he could never forget it.

For an instant the whole scene stood out with startling clearness, the interior of the banking office, the open safe, a number of packages upon the floor, burglar's tools close at hand and the three men being so vividly photographed upon the boy's mind that it was impossible to forget it.

Then darkness succeeded the dazzling light, and Dick's eyes ached with the sudden change.

In a few moments there came a second flash, and the bank was seen to be deserted and everything in its proper place.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE DAILY NEWS.

"Hallo! Burglars! The bank has been robbed!" shouted Dick. "Help, help! Police! The bank has been robbed!"

Then he sprang up the low steps of the bank and shook the front door, finding it locked.

He shouted again with all his might and presently some one came running out of the News office, which was on the opposite side of the street and several doors up.

"Call the police!" shouted Dick. "The bank has been robbed."

Then the storm broke in all its violence, the rain coming in a perfect flood and making the streets like rivers, the thunder pealing and the lightning fairly blinding one.

Dick ran a few steps to the corner of a street, running toward the railroad track, and dashed down it, knowing that a little alley ran from it in the rear of the bank building.

He had taken but a few steps when he saw a light wagon, drawn by a single horse, dash out of the alley at a terrific speed and turn down the street.

There were three men in the wagon, as a sudden flash revealed, and the vehicle turned so swiftly that one man was thrown down, and it was only by the merest chance that they were not all upset.

It was impossible to keep up with the wagon, which went at almost railroad speed, and it soon disappeared, Dick returning to the main street.

There were several persons in front of the bank now, one of whom was a town constable, and Dick quickly described the scene, as he had witnessed it, to this man, and told about the men in the light wagon.

Then he hurried back to the office and struck the bell sharply.

"Send Mr. Thornton here," he said to the office boy, "and be ready to take a note to Thompson, the wood engraver."

In a moment Thornton entered and was greatly amazed when Dick said:

"The First National Bank has been robbed. Get all the particulars you can. Take as many men as you want. I can give you two columns."

Then Dick sent for Mr. Stone and said:

"We've got a big thing. Cut out everything that is not important. I will condense all my latest dispatches. The bank has been robbed. Don't let any of your men go, and get extra hands if you can. We'll surprise the old town with the first number of the News, I can tell you."

Then, as the foreman hurried out, Dick wrote a hasty note, gave it to the waiting boy and said:

"Take this to Thompson and bring him back with you. Don't come back without Thompson or you'll lose your job. Fetch him, and I'll give you five dollars extra this week."

(To be continued)

FROM ALL POINTS

A former Union soldier, who was paid \$50 too much when discharged at the close of the civil war, returned the money to the treasury, with \$100 interest. The contribution went into the Conscience Fund.

Thomas Dunbar, of Seattle, attributes to a silver dollar the saving of his life when Conrad Leo fired point-blank at his breast. Dunbar was stunned by the blow of the bullet striking the silver in a vest pocket. Apparently under the impression that Dunbar at least had been wounded, Leo shot himself and died soon afterward. The two had quarreled over a rooming house transaction.

"I will be up Saturday." This message, written on an egg in a crate of eight dozen, cost a merchant of Wheeling, W. V., \$5.78 in postage. The eggs were sent by a Sardis, Ohio, huckster by parcel post and when the package was opened at the Wheeling postoffice for inspection the message was weighed and charged for at first-class postage rates.

Mrs. William H. Wholf, of York, Pa., whose husband was killed several weeks ago by a train, found \$14,000 in notes and bank certificates of deposit hidden in the cellar of her home. The money was in a paint bucket and Mrs. Wholf found it by carrying out the instructions of her husband. He had told her to dig in a certain corner of the cellar in event of sudden death. The Wolfes were in moderate circumstances.

One of the biggest catches of bullfrogs ever made at Columbus, Ind., is reported by Carmel Carmichael, a fish dealer. Some one told him of a place where there were many frogs, and he went after them at night. By "shining their eyes" with a strong light he managed to catch 200 with his hands. Some of them weighed a pound. Frog "ham" are worth about \$3 a dozen, and he expects to get nearly \$50 for his night's work.

The volcano of Mauna Loa is erupting with increased activity, according to reports received at Honolulu. A new flow of lava started, and at last reports was moving at the rate of two miles a day.

The lava was passing through a heavy forest of mahogany trees, burning the stumps and carrying the trunks on the top of the molten metal.

The Kahuku water system was believed to be in danger from the lava stream, which was reported as being about a quarter of a mile wide.

The port of New York is now the greatest in the world, leading all others in commerce, according to the issue of the United States statistical abstract

made public May 24, 1916. Figures compiled by the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce credit New York with an aggregate foreign trade of \$2,125,000,000, which exceeds by \$200,000,000 the commerce of London, now second in rank. In the matter of exports the pre-eminence of New York over London is even greater, export clearances from the American metropolis aggregating \$1,194,000,000 in the fiscal year 1915, against \$696,000,000 from London, a difference of more than 70 per cent.

The flint pebble industry gives occupation to many women and children along the French coast lying between Havre and Dieppe. The pebbles collected in and near Havre are selected for their spherical shape, and are used exclusively for pulverizing in certain industries, particularly in the manufacture of cement, and in copper mines, being employed in the interior of large cylinders. In the cement industry the slow turning of the pebbles produces a powder which becomes an ingredient of the cement, while in the copper industry the metal is freed of all impurities by the grinding operation. The same kind of pebbles is used for crushing purposes in the manufacture of paint. Another important use of flint pebbles is in the manufacture of porcelain, the pebbles for this purpose being found between Fecamp and Calais. In the latter case the pebbles are pulverized before using.

Disinherited by his mother on account of his participation in the European war as a surgeon in the German army, Dr. Guido Hinkel of Freiberg, Germany, instituted proceedings in the Lebanon County, Pa., courts to break the will of his mother, the late Rosalie Parant Coleman of Paris, France. Following the death of Mrs. Coleman at Paris on April 8, 1915, it was found that while originally she had named her son as the principal beneficiary under the will, she had by a codicil on February 23, 1915, disinherited him in the following terse language: "On account of the war I disinherit my son, Guido Hinkel." The estate left by the late Mrs. Coleman is estimated at \$1,000,000, consisting chiefly of holdings in the Cornwall iron ore banks at Cornwall, in this county, which she leaves to her nephew, J. Coleman Drayton; her second cousin, Ronald George De Reuter, and her friend, Camille Besson, all American citizens. The proceedings instituted are in the form of an appeal from the judgment of the local Register's Court in granting last February letters of administration to the Pennsylvania Company for Insurance on Lives and Granting Annuities of Philadelphia, and is to be followed by a petition for the transfer of the proceedings to the local Orphans' Court for trial.

TIMELY TOPICS

In Sumatra the wind decides the length of time a widow should remain single. Just after her husband's death she plants a flagstaff at her door, upon which a flag is raised. While the flag remains un-torn by the wind, the etiquette of Sumatra forbids her to marry; but at the first rent, however tiny, she can lay aside her weeds, assume her most bewitching smile, and accept the first man who presents himself.

In Switzerland if a child does not attend school on a particular day the parent gets notice from the public authority that he is fined so many francs; the second day the fine is increased, and by the third day the amount becomes a serious one. In case of sickness the pupil is excused, but if there be any suspicion of shamming a doctor is sent. If the suspicion is discovered to be well founded the parent is required to pay the cost of the doctor's visit.

According to the Cumberland (Md.) Daily News: Licensed saloons have again opened in this city after five years of no-license conditions. Both retail and wholesale dealers did an extensive business all day. Special coaches had to be added to the Pennsylvania train running from Mercer, Leesburg and other points in Mercer County, which is now dry. Standing room was at a premium in the train and it is rumored that additional train service will be arranged to take care of the increased traffic originating in Mercer County.

William Lemp, Jr., fifteen-year-old son of the millionaire St. Louis brewer was recently severely paddled by fellow students at the Newman School for Boys, Hackensack, N. J. As a result of the paddling, the boy has been withdrawn from the school. Several days ago, it seems, William was asked by Lannin Benoist, a first class man, to perform some duty on the campus. Young Lemp refused and "talked back." He was stretched across a chair. Nineteen boys are said to have joined in the paddling operation that followed.

A pet pony ridden by Aubry Craft, son of Albert Craft, living north of Fairfield, Neb., is believed to have saved the boy's life while he lay unconscious, after an attack by a vicious bull. When the boy failed to return after having gone for the cattle, a search was started. He was found lying in the pasture, his face badly torn. He was unconscious. Near by was his pony. The tracks in the dirt showed the animal had raced around and around the unconscious boy, keeping away the bull that had attacked him. Later, when driven near the bull, the pony attempted to attack the animal.

His clothing becoming entangled in machinery at the plant of the Tindal-Morris Company, of Eddystone, Pa., J. T. Hargoot, of Philadelphia, was whirled around a shaft and would have been killed had not the buttons on his overalls ripped off, allowing him to drop to the floor. Hargoot, who had been working at the plant less than an hour when the accident happened, is in the Chester Hospital with a fractured skull, a broken right arm and numerous other injuries. Physicians expect him to recover, however. Hargoot had purchased a new pair of overalls, but did not put them on when he went to work. He is satisfied had he worn them instead of using an old worn pair he would have been whirled to his death.

In British waters there now floats a certain ship which embodies many novel features of extreme importance, says the New York Times. So carefully were these secrets guarded while she was being built that the vessel, while on the stocks and during the period of her equipment, was known by all working upon her as H.M.S. Hush. Then came her launching, when she was christened H.M.S. Rampageous. (This, by the way, is not her real name in the navy list—the censor might object to the publication of her real name.) Now, after she has been the cynosure of all British naval eyes for some time, her novel characteristics are found so startling that she is commonly referred to by the navy men as H.M.S. Outrageous.

Visions of untold riches have filled the minds of several colored workmen on the farm of Gen. A. R. Benson, near Dover, Del., who already have unearthed what is supposed to be a cache of stolen goods. So far there have been found four watches, two of which are gold; three women's solid gold rings, a solid gold watch fob, gold breastpins, a \$20 gold piece, two \$10 gold pieces, two \$5 gold pieces and one \$2.50 gold piece. All were found around a large stump, which the workmen a few days ago set about to remove. All of the jewelry and money were in a good state of preservation, except one of the watches, a nickel one, in which the works are rusted. The latest find, a \$20 gold piece, has inspired the workmen to greater diligence, and they are seeking more of the treasure, which they believe lies buried deeper than where they already have dug. It is the belief of Gen. Benson and others who have visited the place that the jewelry and gold were stolen and buried several years ago, when that part of the farm was a wilderness, and that the thief or thieves expected to return and claim their loot, but lost trace of the tree.

SIMPLE SAM

THE POOR BOY

—OR—

Not So Green As He Looked

BY J. P. RICHARDS

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER I (continued).

Sam followed him, took him up in his arms, coolly walked to the gate and tossed him over on the sidewalk as though he were nothing more than a baby.

Of course, the tramp struggled with all his might, but without avail.

When he was tossed clear over the top of the gate, Sam stood there looking over at him with a broad grin on his face.

His mother was standing in the doorway looking at him.

"That's do, Sam," she called, and he deliberately turned and walked back to where she was standing, and asked:

"Who is he, marm?"

"I don't know, Sam. He is a tramp. He wanted me to cook him a meal."

"Gosh! Was he hungry?"

"Yes, he said he was; but you know we haven't anything in the house to cook for beggars. I ordered him out and he wouldn't go."

"Well, he is out now," and as he turned and looked back, he saw the tramp rising to his feet and gazing at him as though a little puzzled.

"You'd better get away, sir," called Mrs. Bradbury, "or you might be hurt."

Instead of leaving, the tramp proceeded to hurl a lot of profanity at her.

"Sam, drive him away," she ordered.

"All right, marm," said he, and he coolly walked back to the gate, opened it and confronted the villainous loafer, who drew an ugly-looking knife and threatened to "rip him open."

Sam deliberately jumped at him, caught him by the right arm and gave it a twist that forced him to drop his knife.

Then Sam turned him around with a grip on the back of his neck and rushed him down the street at the top of his speed.

When he had gone about the length of the block he gave him a kick and a shove, and said:

"Now go away."

The tramp picked himself up, looked back at him and without stopping to recover his knife or hat, deliberately walked off down the street about fifty yards:

Then he stopped and said:

"Let me get my knife and hat."

"You go away," said Sam, "or I'll throw you clear out of town," and he started towards him.

The tramp took to his heels.

He stopped at a blacksmith shop on the next corner and the blacksmith asked him what was his hurry.

"Why, that fellow back there threw me over the fence and won't let me get my hat or knife."

"Well," said the blacksmith, with a broad grin on his face, "if he won't let you get them, you had better let them stay there. They call him 'Simple Sam,' but he can lick Old Nick himself if his mother tells him to do so."

The tramp stood there and looked back down the street, wondering what sort of a chap he had run up against.

The blacksmith told him he was one of the best natured boys alive, but one of the worst to tackle.

Just then another tramp came along, evidently his pal. He had been working the town somewhere else.

"Where's your hat, Jim?" the newcomer asked, and Jim told him the story of how he had been thrown over the fence as though he were nothing but a little puppy.

"Come on, I'll help you get them," and the two started back together.

"Look here, fellows," called the blacksmith, "you had better let me go back and get them for you. He can lick a dozen of you."

"He can't like me," said the newcomer, and they both went on together.

Sam returned to the gate, opened it and went inside, and stood there gazing blankly at them.

His mother saw them coming and said:

"Drive them away, Sam. Don't let them come back here."

Sam threw the gate open and stood in front of it watching them as they advanced.

The blacksmith and several others were at the upper end of the block waiting to see what would happen to them.

Suddenly Sam darted at them and a mix-up followed.

All three went down in the struggle and a cloud of dust rose above them.

The next minute Sam was seen running towards the blacksmith shop with a grip on the ankles of each one and dragging them behind him.

When he reached there the tramps looked as though they had been in a ruction with a full-grown tiger.

He stopped and threw one of them on top of the other, saying:

"Now run away and be good," and with that he started off to return to his home.

The blacksmith and his assistant stood there laughing.

"What did I tell you?" he asked.

"What sort of a fellow is he?" one of the tramps asked.

"One of the best boys that ever lived," said the blacksmith.

(To be continued)

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

TOOK CHAIN AND AUTO.

Harry Gascho, of Alexandria, Ind., drove to Anderson recently in an automobile to attend a circus. He had heard of automobile thieves following a circus, so he took with him a large log chain, and when at the circus left his machine fastened with the chain and a huge lock. When he returned from the afternoon performance lock, chain and automobile were gone. The police here believe the car was taken to a small town in Illinois and sold.

TORPEDO DEFENSE FOR BATTLESHIPS.

The ever-increasing power and range of the torpedo and the inability of the net to stop these terrible weapons have called for some permanent defense; exterior to the ship, which may be carried when the ship is traveling at high speed. A substitute for the net is found in providing a fixed outer shell conforming to the contour of the ship's sides and carried several feet distant from the hull, the water being free to pass between the shell and the hull. This construction has been used on the new British monitors.

WOMAN ROPES ALLIGATOR.

Mrs. Will Hendricks, of Warton, Tex., is receiving the congratulations of her friends over having performed the unusual feat of capturing alive a large alligator. One evening recently she noticed the alligator trying to climb the hog wire fence of the L. O. Ireson pasture, and she ran home and brought a rope with which she lassoed the reptile and tied it to a post. Those who were attracted to the spot to view the catch stated that the alligator was over six feet long, and that it fought desperately to make its escape.

MANHOLE LID AS JUNK.

Alton (Ill.) city officials are having unusual trouble trying to keep the lid on. In addition to the occasional tilting of the "Sunday lid," there has now arisen a new class of offenders who are lifting lids of sewer and other manholes and carting them away to be sold as junk. One of the manhole lids weighs twenty pounds, and in view of the high price of metal because of the war was sold at an attractive price.

Several cases of theft of manhole lids have been reported to City Engineer T. H. Landon, who is conning his brain to devise some way of forestalling the activities of the thieves.

BOY PLAYS PIANO WELL WITH ONE HAND.

Those of you who can play the piano know how hard it is to play difficult music with the left hand, even if one has the use of all his fingers. So the

case of Kenneth Thomas, a Brooklyn boy, who has fingers on his right hand only, and yet plays excellently, is somewhat remarkable. It would be still more interesting to hear and see him play. Recently he played at a musicale given by his teacher. Several pupils sang and played besides young Thomas, but he was the most accomplished of any of them. As his teacher said in a little speech before Kenneth Thomas played two pieces by Sinding, the well-known composer, it was hard enough to play them with ten fingers, let alone five. The boy has to be taught in a different manner from other pupils.

Blind people often become pianists, but it is very much easier to play with two hands, even if one is blind, than with one hand if one can see.

A QUEER HOME DISCOVERED.

Near the little town of Garbe, Okla., in the heart of the wheat belt and among the finest country homes of the State, is a most unique residence. It was occupied for many years by one of the pioneer citizens of the State.

Later this man, S. H. Peters, built a fine house on the spot, and the falling of a cement porch the other day exposed the former queer home. Under this porch was a cave. It is said that this cave was dug in 1894. At a point along a little ravine a sandstone ledge cropped out, and there Peters tunneled out and excavated two large rooms with a sandstone ledge about three feet thick for a roof. The rooms extended sixty feet under the ground, and at the deepest place there was about seven or eight feet of dirt on top. To the back room a skylight, three by nine feet, was opened.

The rooms were plastered and white-coated, and the rock roof was whitewashed, making it light enough for one to read newspapers in any part of the cave. It was very dry at that time, and groceries kept in the cave perfectly. Peters and his family lived there for a long time before he built a home aboveground.

The stovepipe ran up the skylight, and to persons passing along the road the smoke coming out of the ground was a novel sight. Hundreds of persons visited this cave home, and all wondered why the roof didn't fall in, as it was not supported by timbers.

When the wet years came, a little spring in the cave, which furnished all the water for the family, overflowed the rooms at times, and in recent years, when the drain became clogged, the cave filled with water. It took Peters no longer to dig the cave than to build a sod house, like most of the pioneers used to do. The plaster was the only expense to the cave home.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

BARGING LUMBER ACROSS THE GULF.

The lumber trade of Cuba and other islands of the West Indies, which has been depressed for the past year, is reviving rapidly. The demand is mainly for long-leaf pine, and it is beginning to move in quantities out of Pensacola, Mobile, Gulfport, and New Orleans. The abnormal scarcity of bottoms and prevailing high freight rates are retarding factors to a larger increase in the business. Illustrating the straits to which some of the shippers are put and the resourcefulness of some firms, lumber is being loaded on barges at Pensacola, Fla., and towed by tugs the 515 miles across the Gulf of Mexico to Havana.

A NEW MACHINE GUN.

A Dubuque, Iowa, inventor has received patents on a new machine gun, especially designed for purpose of defense. According to the description of this new war implement, it is something entirely new in the line of guns, as well as new in the matter of being a machine gun, the inventor's idea being novel, entirely different from anything ever patented or used for a gun or for a machine gun.

The inventor says this gun may be manufactured for less than one hundred dollars; that there is scarcely any limit to the rapidity of its fire. Another feature of the gun is that it is automatic.

The cartridge, one thousand or ten thousand of them, may be thrown into a hopper. As the machine is operated, the cartridges assemble, are forced into the breech of the gun and discharged automatically at any speed desired.

The gun may be operated by hand or electricity. If operated by electricity one operator might operate one, ten or a hundred or a thousand at a time and might be at any distance from the gun if it is electrically connected.

AEROPLANE CATAPULT IN ACTION.

The armored cruiser North Dakota, the navy's single aviation ship, is now equipped with an aeroplane catapult, which makes it possible to launch upon their flight the heaviest of scouting aircraft after a very short running start. Inside of fifty feet the seaplane attains a speed of fifty miles an hour, while held to a low car running upon a short narrow-gauge track. Just before the car reaches the end of its run and is about to be halted by brakes the flying machine is automatically released and sent sailing into the air with momentum enough to hold safely aloft until its engines have reached their sustaining speed.

Another phase of the navy's technical work in aviation is that done by the bureau of construction and repair at the navy yard in Washington, where

Chief Constructor David W. Taylor has built a wind tunnel for the testing of miniature aeroplanes. In this wind tunnel the small aircraft are so suspended that any horizontal or vertical movement of the little flying machine is promptly detected and measured by sensitive apparatus.

The air is usually blown through this tunnel at a speed of forty miles an hour, which represents the air conditions that the stationary model would have to contend with in moving itself at that rate. Some idea of the sensitiveness of the recording mechanism can be gathered from the fact that at the angle of least resistance an ordinary aeroplane wind model has a horizontal resistance of something less than one-tenth of a pound. Therefore it is necessary that the recording balance should be capable of weighing with accuracy a force of as little as two one-thousandths of a pound.

PIGEONS USED AS ARMY SPIES.

All the nations at present fighting use carrier pigeons, not only for carrying messages, but also for taking photographs. In the equipment of all the German and French army corps are to be found a number of wicker panniers containing pigeons, special men being told off to look after the birds.

The messages which these birds carry, the Philadelphia Ledger tells us, are written on fine tissue paper, which is generally rolled around the leg and fastened there by means of a piece of silk or small rubber band.

To show how useful the French and German authorities regard these pigeons, it has only to be stated that in France no fewer than 15,000 are reserved for government use, and 8,000, according to official statistics, in Germany.

British authorities, too, realize their usefulness (and danger), and have made it illegal for any German or other alien to possess carrier pigeons during the war, for undoubtedly many messages from spies, especially during the early days of the war, were sent to Germany by this means. These messages of from 200 to 300 words can easily be carried from the east coast to parts of Germany in a day.

In the siege of Paris in 1870, when 33 birds were sent out of the doomed city, one bird succeeded in carrying to the outside world on one trip no fewer than 40,000 messages.

This extraordinary feat was accomplished by means of microphotography, the messages being first printed in ordinary type and then photographed. The photographs were reduced many hundred times on to films of collodion, each of which, about two inches square, contained 50,000 words. Sixteen of these films, rolled up in a quill, weighed only one-twenty-fifth part of an ounce.

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, JULY 19, 1916.

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Good Current News Articles

George W. Coombs, aged forty-nine, caught nearly 200 pounds of snapping turtles in Tanner's Creek, about eighty miles from Lawrenceburg, Ind. Coombs used a trout-line, and baited the hooks with frogs, fishing nearly all night. He sold part of his catch for 15 cents a pound and butchered the two largest turtles, weighing nearly fifty pounds, to give several friends turtle soup at a smoker.

William Bryer, a farmer, who resides near Greenville, Pa., lost his five senses when he was kicked by a horse. The animal, although not shod, delivered the kick which landed on Bryer's head and face with enough force to leave a clear imprint of the hoof. Immediately after Bryer became blind. In rapid sequence he lost his sense of hearing, smell, taste and feeling. His condition puzzles physicians as no fracture of the skull has been found.

The skeleton of a monster elk is the center of curiosity in a Royal Centre store window, Logansport, Ind. It was found on the farm of Charles Costello, in Boone Township. Costello's plough struck an old rusty chain. As the chain was dug up, it led to an ancient bear trap, in which was found firmly fastened an animal's hoof. The entire skeleton of the elk was unearthed in fairly good condition. Residents of the township estimate that the skeleton is more than 100 years old.

"In spite of the high price of gasoline, it really does not cost us any more per mile to run the average 1916 car than it did the cars of 1905 or 1906," is the statement recently made at a meeting of the Society of Automobile Engineers, and the speaker further said: "The increased efficiency of engines and decreased weight of car have certainly enabled us to go more miles on a gallon of gasoline; in fact, I think almost double what was possible ten years ago, or even five years ago in this country."

When wood is badly dented or scratched it is often a problem to know how to get rid of the marks. This is quite easy if the following plan is adopted. First of all fold a piece of blotting-paper at least four times; then saturate with water, finally allowing the superfluous moisture to drip away. Now heat a flat-iron until it is about the warmth required for laundry work. Place the damp blotting paper over the dent and press firmly with the iron. As soon as the paper dries examine the mark. It will then be found that the cavity has filled up to a surprising extent. Where the dent is very deep a second, or even a third, application on the lines indicated might be tried. Sooner or later even serious depressions can be drawn up, and most people who have not tried this plan will be surprised at the result of the treatment. Repolishing will clear away even the slight marks that might finally remain.

Grins and Chuckles

"I've not seen old Mrs. Wiggins lately. How is she?" "Dead, sir." "What, joined the great majority?" Oh, no, sir. She was a good enough woman as far as I know."

"I'd rather have a nutmeg than fame," said the idiot. "Why?" said the wise man. "Because," replied the idiot, "fame is for the great, but the nutmeg is for the grater."

"Jinks claims to be able to speak seven different languages." "Yes, and if you'll notice, he has picked out only the languages that no one in this part of the world pretends to know anything about."

Aged Groom—I have a confession to make. Young Bride—Goodness! What? Aged Groom—I wear false teeth. Young Bride—Oh, well, never mind. If they are on a gold plate, they will probably be worth something.

Alfred, aged five, had intently watched his mother place a coin in a telephone box and speak to his father. When the latter returned home in the evening, Alfred eagerly inquired: "Did you catch the nickel mamma put in the little black box, papa?"

The judge did not seem to appreciate the remarks of the lawyer for the defense. (Several years before they had had a fight over the question of religion.) At last the judge interrupted the lawyer and said: "Do you know that everything you are saying is going in one ear and out the other?" The lawyer turned to him and replied: "Your Honor, what is to prevent it?"

Sunday School Teacher—I told you last Sunday that I wished each of you would try to make at least one person happy during the week. Did you? Boy—Yes, miss; I made grandma happy. "That's noble. How did you do it?" "I went to visit her, and she's always happy when she sees I've got a good appetite."

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

CAT NURSES FOXES.

Daniel Wiggins, who lives near Granger, N. S., felled a tree on his place recently and discovered that a mother fox and family had been deprived of their home in the midst of the roots. The old fox was killed; Wiggins carried the infants to his home and delivered them to a cat who had just lost her little ones—by drowning. The cat accepted the substitute babies with satisfaction.

PRICE OF SLAP \$2,500.

A "moderate" slap is worth \$2,500. Such was the decision the other day in the case of Francis Seiberling, an Akron attorney, who sued Henry W. Corning, president of the Standard Sewing Machine Company, for \$25,000 for a slap alleged to have been given him last November while the two were arguing over the right to occupy a Pullman drawing room for which both held tickets. The case, which lasted four days, was tried before Judge Frank B. Gott, of Common Pleas Court, Cleveland, Ohio. The jury deliberated three hours.

USED HOT POKER.

Miss Mountain, of Uniontown, Pa., weighing 115 pounds, must pay a fine imposed on her by a Smithfield Township justice because she threatened to use a red-hot poker on J. W. Barger, age sixteen, and weighing 150 pounds, after he had threatened to duck her in a watering-trough.

Miss Mountain ordered Barger to write a composition. The pupil refused, and threatened to carry Miss Mountain outside the school and drop her in the watering-trough. The little school mistress locked the doors, pushed a poker into the coals and heated it red-hot.

"Now will you write that composition or take a beating with this poker?" she asked.

Barger wrote the composition. His parents had the girl arrested.

SOME BIG BLUFFS.

The secret evacuation of Suvla and Anzac by the English army of occupation under the very noses of the Turks—"the biggest bluff in war's history," as it has not inaptly been termed—bears a close resemblance to the similar abandonment of the Redan by the Russians during the Crimean War.

For months the heavy guns of the French and British had been pounding unavailingly at this exceedingly strong fortress. Twice they had tried to storm it, only to be repulsed with great slaughter. A third attack had been ordered to take place on September 18, but on the early morning of that date, before daybreak, Corporal Ross of the Royal

British Engineers, who was in charge of one of the advanced saps, noticing that the place was strangely still, crept forward to investigate.

He found the works untenanted, save by dead men and a few badly wounded, and hastened back to report to the British commander, who at first refused to believe him. But investigation soon proved the truth of the plucky corporal's statements. The entire garrison had been quietly withdrawn under cover of darkness to the north forts, leaving the road to Sebastopol open, the Philadelphia Ledger tells us.

Ross was awarded the Victoria Cross and was known thenceforward throughout the British army as "Redan Ross."

When the armies of Napoleon were overrunning Europe, General Massena, with 18,000 men, appeared suddenly before the Austrian town of Feldkirch and demanded its surrender. Instead of complying, the burgomaster issued orders that the church bells were to be set ringing and that the burghers, their wives and daughters, clad in holiday attire, were to assemble in the market square and there make merry.

The result was exactly what he had hoped for. Massena heard the sounds of rejoicing, watched from the heights overlooking the town the gathering of throngs in the streets and came to the conclusion that the townsfolk must have received intelligence that the Austrian army, which was believed to be somewhere in the vicinity, was advancing to their relief.

As to give battle there and then formed no part of Napoleon's general plan of action, Massena ordered a retreat. Feldkirch was saved, and by a bluff, for as a matter of fact no relieving force was anywhere near at the time.

A bluff that was eminently successful resulted in the Earl of Peterborough securing possession of Barcelona in the early part of the eighteenth century.

The defenses of the city at that time were extremely strong. Peterborough had with him barely 3,000 indifferently armed troops and two small cannon. Halting his force some miles away in the hills, he rode forward, attended only by a small escort bearing a flag of truce, and demanded an audience with the Governor.

To him the earl explained that he had been ordered to take the city by assault, but being wishful to avoid useless bloodshed he preferred to allow him to surrender it of his own free will.

Incredible though it may seem, this most colossal of bluffs "came off." The Governor, after some parleying, agreed to accept the British's general's alternative.

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES

BIG POPLAR TREE.

Perhaps one of the largest poplar trees ever marketed in Kentucky has just been cut, manufactured and loaded at Kona Station for shipment to Cincinnati dealers. The tree was ten feet in diameter at the butt and was over 300 feet to the first limb. When sawed it cut out 12,700 feet of first-class lumber, 6,000 feet of other grades—in all nearly 19,000 feet. It was cut in the Cumberland Mountains not far from the Virginia border line.

HEIR TO \$10,000 KEEPS WORKING.

Milton Hapner, aged sixty, employed in a livery stable in Fort Wayne, Ind., has received \$10,000 from the estate of a relative who lived in the East, but neither will quit his livery stable job nor invest his money in any way. To all advice as to how to become a millionaire Mr. Hapner turns a deaf ear. "I have worked hard all my life, and I expect to keep on working," Mr. Hapner said. This money came to me unexpectedly, and I'm going to hold on to it."

MOVING STONES

There is a curiosity in Long Pond, Cumberland County, Maine. On the easterly side of the pond is a cove which extends about 100 rods farther east than the general course of the shore. The bottom is clay, and so shoal that a man may wade 50 rods into the pond. At the bottom of this cove are stones of various sizes, which have an annual motion toward the shore. The proof of this is the mark or track left behind them, and the bodies of clay driven up before them.

Some of these stones are two or three tons weight, and have left a track of several rods behind them, having at least a common cartload of clay before them. The shore of the cove is lined with these stones, which, it would seem, have crawled out of the water.

THE WOOD PULP PRODUCT.

The forests of the United States are contributing over 2,894,000 tons of wood pulp a year to the paper industry. The paper thus produced in 1914 was valued at more than \$294,000,000, according to the Census Bureau. The total value of all the wood pulp products exceeded \$332,000,000, as against more than \$267,000,000 in 1909.

Of the 727 paper mills, 152 were in New York State, 86 in Massachusetts, 59 in Wisconsin, 54 in Pennsylvania, 48 in Ohio, 44 in Connecticut, 39 in Michigan, 38 in Maine, 34 in New Jersey, and the rest scattering. There are six in the South.

The newspapers produced used 1,186,000 tons in rolls, valued at \$47,332,000, and 127,000 tons in

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GREENBACKS

Pack of \$1,000 Stage Bills, 10c; 8 packs, 25c. Send for a pack and show the boys what a WAD you carry. C. A. NICHOLS, JR., Box 90, Chili, N. Y.

in sheets, valued at \$5,610,000. The book paper amounted to 935,000 tons, valued at \$74,000,000. The fine paper amounted to 248,000 tons, valued at \$34,000,000.

Other materials used in paper making were 371,346 tons of rags, 1,578,000 tons of waste paper, 121,230 tons of rope, jute bagging, threads, etc., and 309,345 tons of straw.

The output of wrapping paper was 881,799 tons; blotting paper, 14,157 tons; tissue paper, 121,598 tons; wall paper, 96,527 tons; building paper, 243,908 tons. The industry grew in value of products 24 per cent. since 1909.

IN SPITE OF STONE WALLS.

Even stone walls cannot keep thieves out of a bank. The directors of the Bank of England were once startled to receive an invitation to meet an unknown man in the strong room of the bank at midnight. "You think you is all safe hand you bank his safe, but I knows better. I bin hinside the bank. the last 2 nite hand you nose nuffin about it. But I am nott a theaf so hif yer will meet mee in the great squar room, with all the moneys, at twelf 2 nite. Ile explain orl to you, let only 2 cum down, and say nuffin to nobody." The strong room was guarded the next night, in spite of a disposition to regard the letter as a hoax, by police, and—nothing occurred. The next phase of the mystery was more astonishing than ever. A heavy chest of papers and securities taken from the strong room arrived at the bank, with a letter complaining that the directors had set the police upon the writer, and that he had therefore not appeared as he promised; but to prove that he was neither a thief nor a fool he sent a chest of papers he had taken from the bank. Let a few gentlemen be alone in the room, and he would join them at midnight, said the writer, and to cut short a long and strange chapter of bank history, a man with a dark lantern burst into the strong room of the bank at midnight after calling from behind the stone walls for the directors to put out the lights. He was one of a strange class of men who gained a living by searching the sewers at night, and through an opening from a sewer he had found his way into the richest room in the world.

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JULY 21, 1916

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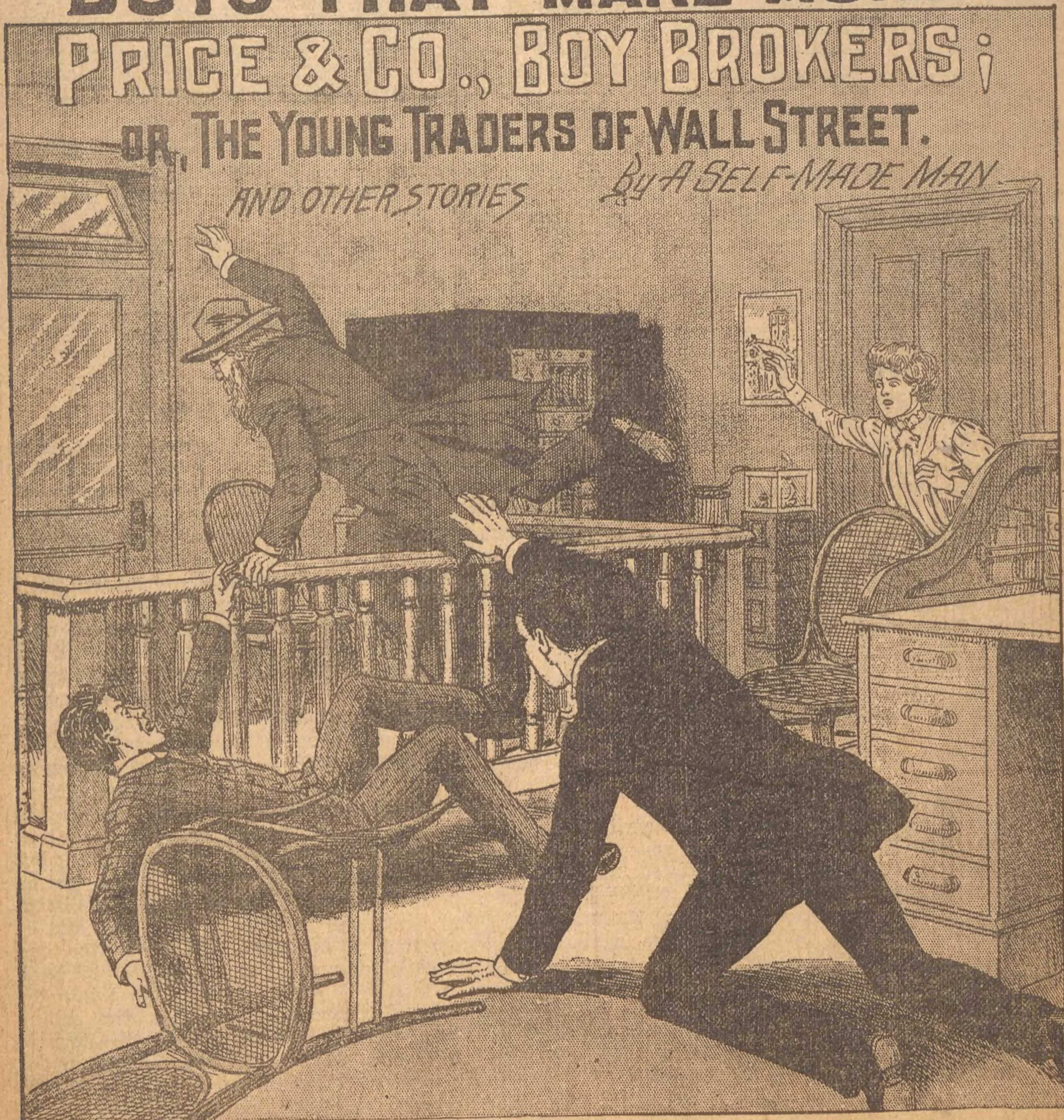
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